DPS begins recruitment of new officers. PAGE 2
'IPI should pay creditors prior to lifting suspension of casino license.' PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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Volume XXXIV, Issue No. 2
WEDNESDAY JANUARY 3, 2024
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KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
Evelyn Roda holds the CNMI's New Year's baby, Aerich Chen Roda Ayuyu, with the baby's grandmother, Yunei Chen Ayuyu.

New Year's baby arrives just in the nick of time

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In a surprising turn of events, the CNMI nearly ended the first day of 2024 without naming a New Year's baby, but Aerich Chen Roda Ayuyu made it just in time when he entered the world nearly three hours short of Jan. 2.

In the history of CNMI New Year's babies, the Commonwealth Health Center has

See BABY on Page 4

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Marianas Pacific (MarPac) Distributors representatives pose for a photo with Evelyn Roda and Aerich Chen Roda Ayuyu, the first baby born in the CNMI this year.

'Opioid bill will effectively create necessary policy'

» **House passes legislation on opioid overdose reversal medication**

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Attorney General Edward Manibusan has determined that a bill governing

See OPIOID on Page 4

Manibusan

Alden bill seeks to suspend net energy metering

Aldan

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Rep. Vincent S. Aldan (Ind-Saipan) has introduced a bill that will suspend the net energy metering in the CNMI to address concerns related to grid stability and management.

According to Aldan's House Bill 23-

See ALDAN on Page 4

Alleged knife-wielding robber arrested

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
Kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

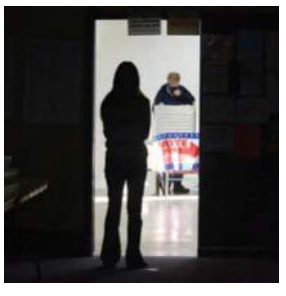
A man accused of invading and robbing a Navy Hill home while allegedly wielding a knife was arrested over the weekend and was brought before the court yesterday for a bail hearing.

Joseph Lee was arrested last Saturday and was brought

See ALLEGED on Page 4

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
Joseph Lee is escorted by Department of Corrections officers back to DOC following his bail hearing yesterday before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho.

INSIDE



NATION
U.S. presidential elections have been rocked in recent years by economic disaster, stunning gaffes, secret video and a pandemic.
PAGE 12

ASIA
A series of powerful earthquakes hit western Japan, leaving at least 30 people dead and damaging buildings, vehicles and boats.
PAGE 13

LIFE & STYLE
Cher has filed a petition to become a temporary conservator overseeing her 47-year-old son's money.
PAGE 15

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

DPS begins recruitment of new officers

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Public Safety has begun recruiting individuals for its upcoming Police Academy following the termination of 12 department officers.

DPS Commissioner Clement Bermudes said that recruitment for the upcoming Police Academy has begun, with an initial plan to launch the academy in the first quarter of the year.

"We have announced the police officer positions and now we have the eligibility list of individuals that have applied. Those on the list are the people that the police department will further look into and consider for hiring," he said.

DPS initially considered holding the academy in February, but Bermudes said personnel processing issues mean they could tentatively start in March.

"We will be processing those applicants, so that we can hopefully start the academy between January and March. Personnel processing challenges delayed the police academy," he said.

Bermudes said DPS is looking to recruit 30 individuals.

"We are looking to hire a total of 30 police officers. That's 25 on Saipan, and five for Rota and Tinian. The police academy will re-energize [the department] and give DPS an opportunity to regroup. My fear is overworking our officers. That's one of the concerns I have," he said.

DPS currently has 168 uniformed officers. If the department can boost its numbers to a total of 250 police officers, that will allow officers to have actual time for themselves and their families, Bermudes said.

Bermudes

Back in November 2023, DPS terminated 12 officers of the initial 28 who were under investigation for allegedly incurring illegal overtimes. Bermudes earlier said it was proven during investigation that these officers managed to accrue illegal overtime hours by manually writing in their hours instead of clocking in using biometrics.

In December 2023, nine of the 12 officers appealed their terminations to the Civil Service Commission.

Commenting on the recently filed appeals, Bermudes said these officers have the right to do so as former government employees. DPS, for its part, will be preparing its response.

In 2022, the transition team assigned to DPS found that the department requested approval for over 11,000 hours of overtime—roughly one year and a half's' worth of regular work hours—in just one pay period in December.

More specifically, the transition report noted that a whopping 11,127.25 overtime hours were requested for the pay period from Dec. 4, 2022, to Dec. 17, 2022.

In addition, the transition team also stated that upon review of timesheets and OT requests from January 2022 to January 2023, it found that DPS had been paying out excessive OT accruals for the same group of officers, some higher-ranking officers and certain lower ranking ones as well—specific to certain sections.

The transition team found that, of the over 11,000 hours in overtime, about 4,000 OT hours, roughly about five-and-a-half months of regular hours, were requested for 40 officers who were allegedly part of former DPS commissioner Robert Guerrero's "inner circle."

HAPPY NEW YEAR
Tenants of Navy Hill Terraces pose for a group photo during their New Year's countdown potluck party on the rooftop.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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EX-IPI CONTRACTOR REMINDS CCC OF ITS PREVIOUS ORDER:

'IPI should pay creditors prior to lifting suspension of casino license'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A former contractor of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC has reminded the Commonwealth Casino Commission board of its previous order that lifting the suspension of IPI's casino gaming license should be premised on IPI paying the judgment that have been awarded IPI's creditors by federal and local courts.

Guocao Qian, president of USA Fanter Corp. Ltd., reminded the CCC board in a letter that its order dated June 25, 2020, requires IPI to settle its accounts payable first. Qian urged the commissioners to honor their statements in the order that any settlement with IPI that would allow for the lifting of its casino license suspension—including the sale and/or transfer of the license itself—would include payment of any outstanding obligation to any private entity that has been ordered by a court.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Tony Muña, who is the general consultant for USA Fanter Corp. Ltd., informs members of the Commonwealth Casino Commission board during last Thursday's board meeting about the company's reminder to the board of its previous order stating that settlement with Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC in lifting the suspension of IPI's casino gaming license should include amounts owed judgment creditors awarded by the federal and local courts.

Separately, Tony Muña, who is a general consultant for USA Fanter, informed the board during its monthly meeting last Thursday that he wrote the letter and that Qian signed it.

The CCC order states that the commission "deems it necessary and proper to ensure … IPI is financially suitable and operating suitably by requiring [it] to settle any outstanding obligations owed to the U.S.A., the CNMI, and the political agencies of either, make any contribution required by an agreement with a public entity, and immediately pay any outstanding obligation to any private entity if so ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction."

The CCC order, which was signed by board chair Edward C. DeLeon Guerrero, stated that IPI "shall settle in full any payable or contribution owed to a public entity" within 30 calendar days from the date of the order, and that IPI "shall immediately make any payment or contribution required by an agreement with a public entity; immediately pay any outstanding obligation to any private entity if so ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction; and immediately pay any debt owed to any private entity in which is more than 89 days old."

In USA Fanter's lawsuit against IPI, the federal court already awarded the company $500,000 plus post-judgment interest at 4.34% per annum, Qian said. Separately, in another lawsuit USA Fanter filed against IPI, the federal court awarded Qian's company $226,127 plus post-judgment interest at 4.76% per annum. In total, USA Fanter was awarded $726,127 in judgments, Qian said.

He said their attorney has advised that sale of IPI's remaining assets will be insufficient to satisfy judgment creditors.

Muña said it's very important that whatever is going to be done last Saturday or thereafter, if IPI comes up with the payment of $62 million in outstanding casino license fees, it has to include judgment creditor balances.

"Without that inclusion, then the commission is in violation of its order of lifting a license for which the licensee has been deemed to be unsuitable," he said, adding that they expect the commission to honor its order.

IPI has failed to pay $62 million or part of it last Saturday, which was the 30-day deadline given by the board to IPI.

Man pleads not guilty to violating gun laws

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A man who was arrested for allegedly violating several gun laws has pleaded not guilty to the charges against him.

Alexander Palacios Borja Jr. appeared before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho last week, waived his right to a preliminary hearing, and entered a plea of not guilty.

Camacho set Borja's trial for March 26.

Following the hearing, Borja was remanded back to Department of Corrections custody as the defense could not provide the court with an eligible third party custodian to whom Borja could be released.

Borja, 32, is facing gun-related charges for violating firearm regulations on storage, lawful transportation, persons permitted to possess ammunition, removal of a firearm's serial numbers, and firearm owner's identification card requirement exceptions.

The Superior Court had imposed a $25,000 cash bail on Borja. He was arrested after he was allegedly caught throwing a bag out of a car window at a traffic stop. The bag was allegedly later found to contain a handgun.

According to court documents, police conducted a violator stop on a green Hyundai Tucson operated by Borja last Dec. 14, because the car was being driven with no lights on the car's rear license plate.

As the first officer was approaching Borja, another officer said they saw a black bag fly out of the passenger-side window and land on the ground. Upon opening the bag, police found a Glock handgun loaded with a magazine clip.

When police asked Borja about the bag, he initially claimed that he did not know who owns the bag. Later, however, Borja allegedly admitted to police that he grabbed the black bag from the back seat and threw it out of the passenger-side window, as he was afraid he may be charged with possession of a firearm.

He added that the Glock handgun inside the black bag belonged to his godbrother, who told him to hold it for him until he was released from prison.

After the traffic stop, police impounded Borja's car and Borja was transported to the Department of Public Safety.

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

Alexander Palacios Borja Jr., left, is escorted by a Department of Corrections officer to a hearing before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho.

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
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BABY

From page 1

always delivered a newborn soon after the stroke of midnight of Jan.1. or had women in labor and ready to give birth by Jan 1.

However, nurses and midwives at CHCC were shocked this year when the hospital's labor and delivery ward was silent as the clock struck 12am last Monday, with no prospective New Year's baby expected. It now appears that this year's special guest wanted to make a grand entrance. Weighing in at a little over 11 lbs, Ayuyu was born to parents Evelyn Roda and Agustin Ayuyu Jr. in the nick of time, arriving at 9:17pm on Monday.

"[Roda] was the only one who gave birth on New Year's Day. Usually, we deliver a baby closer to when New Year's Day hits instead of almost the following day. Around the holidays, the census in the hospital goes down a lot but it's been light for a couple of days," said CHC midwife Teresa Anderson.

Anderson, a veteran in helping mothers deliver children and well versed in delivering New Year's babies, shared that Ayuyu was born with no complications.

"The mother's labor started at 2pm on Jan. 1; labor was about seven hours. The birth of the baby wasn't complicated. The mother's water broke first and then she went into labor, so it was a little slower, but other than that, it was a pretty normal birth and she gave birth naturally. He was born at 5 lbs and 11 ounces," she said.

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

Commonwealth Health Center nurses and midwife pose for a photo with New Year's baby Aerich Chen Roda Ayuyu and his mother, Evelyn Roda.

On behalf of her team at CHC, Anderson congratulates the family on their new bundle of joy.

"Congratulations to the family. The mother and the family did an amazing job, I loved taking care of them while they were here," she said.

In an interview with the baby's mother, Roda, she said she went to CHC at around 12pm last Monday, unsure if she was going to give birth yet, but at around 2pm, her seven-hour long labor began.

Speaking of her experience throughout the process, she said she and her baby were taken care of at CHC and she is excited that her baby is the first baby of the year.

"I came in at around 12:30pm but went into labor at around 2pm so my labor was like seven hours. My birthing experience here at CHCC was good, the nurses really helped me with my delivery. This is my first time birthing a New Year's Day baby and it's so exciting," she said.

Roda's mother-in-law, Yuenei Chen Ayuyu, was also present and shared that, in the Chinese culture, the first baby born in a year is considered lucky, so she is so happy to have welcomed her grandson on New Year's Day.

"I'm very happy that my grandson was the first baby of 2024. I believe it's also [a symbol] of good luck. In China, we say that when a baby is born on the first day, of the first month, of a New Year, they're lucky. My grandson was that and was also the only baby in the hospital today. I am so happy to welcome my grandson today and I'm so happy for my son and daughter in law," she said.

After years of hiatus, Marianas Pacific Distributors resumed its tradition of greeting the New Year's baby at the hospital with generous gifts.

"For the last couple of years, we just had the parents, along with the New Year's baby, come in and accept their gifts here at MarPac. This was due to COVID. But now, we've finally gone back to our tradition of personally visiting the first newborn baby of the year," said Thomas Babauta Basa, MarPac's consumer sales manager.

This year, MarPac surprised the family with about $500 worth of gifts.

"This year, we awarded the New Year's baby and his family with Huggies diapers and wipes, feminine products for the mother, Enfamil, and other small gifts we wanted to give the family," he said.

"Marpac has always been known to give back to our community. We've been here 50 years and because we love our consumers and community, we love to give back as much as we can as well," Basa added.

Basa also congratulated the family.

"On behalf of MarPac, congratulations to the Roda-Ayuyu family on welcoming their new baby and the CNMI's first, if not only, baby born on New Year's Day," he said.

OPIOID

From page 1

opioid overdose reversal medication will create the necessary policy to ensure that emergency medical services and others have the legal authority, access, and training in the administration of naloxone, which is used to reverse or reduce the effects of opioids.

Manibusan said House Bill 23-23 thoroughly describes who is permitted to administer naloxone, who is to be trained in its administration, who is required to carry naloxone, who is to be exempt, and other relief from liability when acting in good faith and in the absence of gross negligence or willful misconduct.

"By creating [this] new policy, as well as amending current policy, H.B. 23-23 appears to be comprehensive and well planned for a preliminary implementation," said Manibusan in his written comments on the legislation.

Last week, the House of Representatives adopted a report by the House Committee on Health and Welfare that recommends the passage of H. B. 23-23. All 17 House members present at the session then voted "yes" to pass the legislation.

Authored by Rep. Malcolm J. Omar (Ind-Saipan), H. B. 23-23 seeks to establish a CNMI Drug Overdose Policy; to authorize and mandate first responders to possess opioid overdose reversal medication; to authorize standing orders for opioid overdose reversal medication; and to provide limited immunity for dispensing opioid overdose medication. The bill is now before the Senate for action.

Manibusan said in his comments the only policy decision for the committee would be to determine whether more regulatory framework is needed at this time.

Manibusan said medical professionals on island have published information on the number of opioid deaths and overdoses in the CNMI, which stands at around one death and two overdoses in the last year.

Manibusan said it would be crucial to monitor the usage of federal funds intended for naloxone, particularly since the actual need for naloxone is almost non-existent compared to other states.

The framework of H.B. 23-23 seems to be solid, though, Manibusan said, and any such funds would likely be used appropriately (providing naloxone, education training, etc.).

He said the bill follows the trend of many states that have granted naloxone administration authority to emergency medical services providers. Manibusan said EMS authority to administer naloxone is governed largely by state scope of practice laws and protocols. He said these policies specify appropriate indications and permissible dosages and routes of administration.

The AG noted that the authority that gives the CNMI the ability to create related policy rests with Section 319 of the Public Health Service Act. Under the PHS Act, the secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services may determine that a disease or disorder presents a public health emergency; or that a public health emergency , including significant outbreaks of infectious disease or bioterrorist attacks, exists.

While this federal public health emergency concerning the opioid crisis does not in itself permit unprescribed use of naloxone, nor create legal protections for its nonprescriptive use, it does in effect open the door for states to create their own legislation regarding the issue, Manibusan said. Due to this public health emergency, states may now draft and enact standing orders similar to H.B. 23-23.

Manibusan said the intent of the declaration is to allow individual states to control the parameters in which medications such as naloxone is to be used, by whom, and associated legal protections, as well as to receive federal funding and remove red tape in order to achieve the desired results of combatting the opioid crisis.

Dr. Lily Muldoon, who is the medical director of Public Health at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., has expressed support for H.B. 23-23, telling the committee that the CNMI is expected to see an increase in opiate overdoses, similar to what has been happening in the U.S. mainland and in Guam.

ALDAN

From page 1

92, not allowing excess energy from individual solar systems to feed back into the grid could lessen potential fluctuations in electricity supply and demand.

The CNMI created a net metering program in 2014 that requires the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to offer net metering to its commercial and residential electricity customers that have renewable energy systems of up to 10 megawatts.

The lawmaker stated in his legislation that doing away with net energy metering could lead to a fairer cost allocation for maintaining the CNMI's electrical grid.

Also, without the net energy metering, the burden of grid maintenance costs would not fall disproportionately on non-solar customers, the bill adds.

Moreover, he said, this shift could encourage investments in battery storage or other energy storage solutions, promoting greater grid independence.

Aldan said the CNMI might explore alternative approaches like community solar projects that distribute benefits and costs more equitably among participants.

He said financial considerations could also play a role, as eliminating net energy metering subsidies may alleviate some budgetary pressures.

ALLEGED

From page 1

before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho yesterday on charges of robbery, assault with a dangerous weapon, and disturbing the peace. Camacho imposed a $20,000 cash bail on Lee.

Despite the defense asking that Lee be released on his recognizance or at least to a third-party custodian on the argument that he wasn't brought before the court in a timely manner, the judge remanded the defendant back to Department of Corrections custody. Lee was ordered to return to court Jan. 10 for a preliminary hearing; he will be arraigned on Jan. 22.

According to court documents, the Department of Public Safety received a report at around 5:58am on Dec. 25, 2023, about a burglary and theft incident in progress. The caller, Jeffrey Hofschneider Jr., informed police that there was a man inside his house stealing items and that he was armed with a knife.

At the scene, Hofschneider told police that he heard noises outside his room at about 4:30am, but he thought it was the wind and the leaves blowing, so he just ignored it.

A louder sound roused him at around 5am, so he looked outside his bedroom and that's when he allegedly saw a man crouched in the living room, trying to pack a karaoke machine inside a bag.

Hofschneider told police he yelled at the man and the defendant allegedly picked up a knife and charged at Hofschneider. The victim, however, managed to close and lock his bedroom door.

At that point, Hofschneider said he took out his service weapon and warned the burglar that he had a gun and would shoot. He then called police for assistance.

Some of the things Lee allegedly stole were a Magic Sing Karaoke set, microchips, a laptop, shoes, alcoholic beverages, a hat, shorts, and the key to a Nissan Titan car, along with some house keys.

Lee was identified by a neighbor who sent Hofschneider a photo of the suspect and Hofschneider allegedly identified the clothes that Lee was wearing as among the items that had been stolen.

Hofschneider later positively identified Lee in a police line-up as the man whom he allegedly saw inside his house on Christmas Day.

Mending Hearts donates anew to CHCC's NICU

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The moment that started it all: Amie McRoberts is shown here cradling her daughter, Emma Jo.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mending Hearts has donated hundreds, if not thousands, of blankets, kimonos. GI-tube covers, pillow cases, hats and lovies to hospitals around the world, including their yearly donation to CHCC.

Cathy McRoberts, who founded the nonprofit group Mending Hearts that regularly makes a donation to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., was on island this year to deliver in person the items that she and Mending Hearts have made each year in memory of her granddaughter, Ella Marie.

Mending Hearts is a group from Cedar Falls, Iowa that McRoberts started because of her granddaughters, Ella Marie and Emma Jo, who were born prematurely on Saipan, to Amie McRoberts. Both girls, born at just 28 weeks, weighed in at only 2lbs 4oz. At the time of their birth, the neonatal intensive care unit at the Commonwealth Health Center was a very different place than it is now. Both girls were too small and had way too many tubes and lines to get to wear clothes while in the NICU on Saipan. They instead were wrapped in Saran Wrap to stay warm.

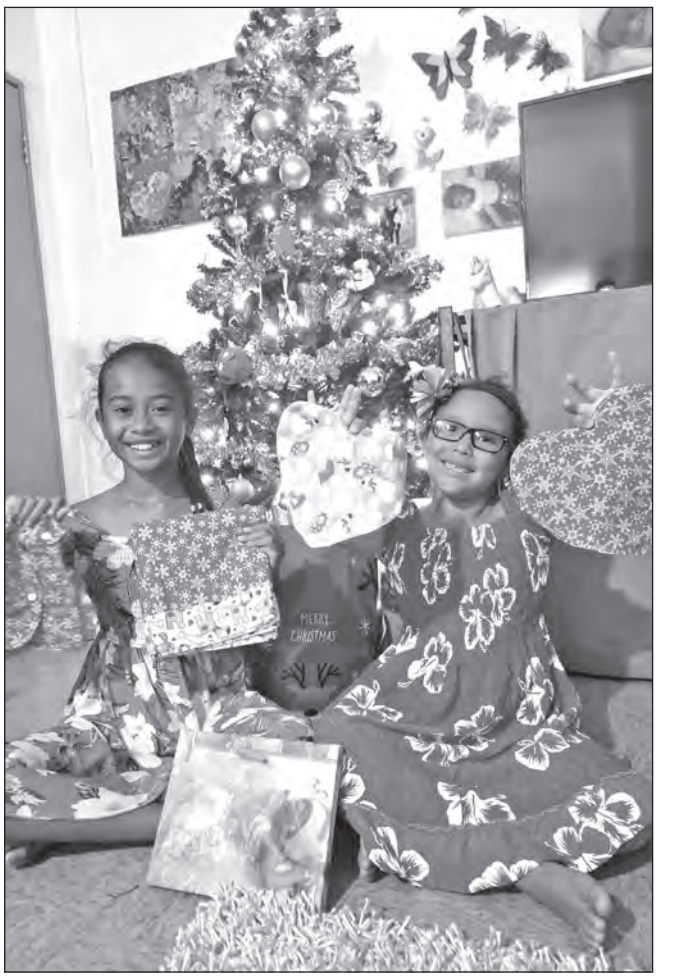
When Emma Jo arrived at the Radys Hospital in San Diego, she was immediately given a little kimono to wear. That moment changed everything. Amie and Cathy felt like they had a "real" baby to take care of, fight for, and love. At 37 days old, Emma Jo was held and dressed for the first time. It was a magical moment, but also a very sad moment. Ella Marie had passed away at CHCC without ever getting the chance to have been held or dressed. From that moment on, Cathy McRoberts made it her mission to make sure no other baby on Saipan had that same experience.

Since then, Mending Hearts has donated hundreds, if not thousands, of blankets, kimonos. GI-tube covers, pillow cases, hats and lovies to hospitals around the world, including their yearly donation to CHCC. Last Dec. 23, 2023, Mending Hearts donated almost 50 sets of hats, blankets, lovies and kimonos to share with babies in the NICU. They also donated around 40 GI-tube covers to the hospital's Children's Clinic.

This year was also special because Cathy McRoberts was able to meet for the first time the NICU nurses that took care of Ella Marie and Emma Jo on Saipan. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Cathy McRoberts and her nonprofit group, Mending Hearts, donate almost 50 sets of hats, blankets, lovies and kimonos to share with babies in the neonatal intensive care unit at the Commonwealth Health Center last Dec. 23, 2023.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The donation includes 50 sets of hats, blankets, lovies, kimonos, and around 40 GI-tube covers to the hospital's Children's Clinic.

Edwin Kim named to Dean's List at Lehigh University in fall semester

BETHLEHEM, PA—Edwin Kim of Saipan has made it to the Dean's List in the fall 2023 semester of Lehigh University in Pennsylvania.

Dean's List status is awarded to students who earned a scholastic average of 3.6 or better while carrying at least 12 hours of regularly graded courses.

For more than 150 years, Lehigh University (lehigh.edu) has combined outstanding academic and learning opportunities with leadership in fostering innovative research. The institution is among the nation's most selective, highly ranked private research universities. Lehigh's five colleges—College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business, College of Education, College of Health, and the P.C. Rossin College of Engineering and Applied Science—provide opportunities to 7,000+ students to discover and grow in an academically rigorous environment along with a supportive, engaged campus community. ***(PR)***

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INVITATION TO BID
ITB24-GOV-42400016

SUBMISSION DATE: 9:00 AM ChST, MONDAY, JANUARY 16, 2024

SUPPLY & INSTALLATION OF TYPHOON SHUTTERS AT THE ROTA HEALTH CENTER

Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lieutenant Governor David M. Apatang, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), is soliciting sealed bids for the ***Supply & Installation of Typhoon Shutters at the Rota Health Center,*** Songsong village, Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). This project is funded by the 702 Capital Improvement Project funding under the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs.

The project package will be available in digital format only on **Wednesday, December 19 2023** at the Capital Improvement Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, during regular working hours.

A **Pre-Bid Conference** will be held at the project site in Songsong village, Rota, Saipan, CNMI at **10:00 AM ChST, January 5, 2024.**

Questions regarding this ITB may be submitted via email to Ms. Nerissa B. Karakaya at nerissa.benavente@gov.mp no later than **4:00 PM ChST, Thursday, January 9, 2024.** All Questions & Answers will be shared with all prospective bidders.

Bidders located outside of the CNMI must fill out and submit the Notice of Intent to Bid Form to the Director of Procurement Services no later than 9:00 AM ChST, Wednesday, January 19, 2024.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS, AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/s/ARNOLD I. PALACIOS
Governor, CNMI

/S/ BRIEN SERS NICHOLAS JR.
Acting Director, PS

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB24-BECQ/DLNR-42400026-CIF ROTA

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 30, 2024 TIME: 09:30 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) AGRICULTURAL TRACTOR FOR DLNR, ROTA"

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/S/ RICHARD V. SALAS
ACTING ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ BRIEN S. NICHOLAS JR.
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

GRMC welcomes 2 new interventional cardiologists

DEDEDO, Guam—Guam Regional Medical City welcomes the addition of two interventional cardiologists to the hospital's cardiovascular team: Drs. Bishoy ElBebawy and Maheswara "Mahesh" Golla.

"With Drs. Golla and ElBebawy on board, this means that GRMC's cardiovascular team is now offering advanced treatments for anyone suffering a major heart attack, and this is available to our entire community 24 hours a day, seven days a week," said Dr. Alexander "Beau" Wielaard, GRMC's chief executive officer.

Dr. ElBebawy specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of heart and blood vessel conditions using advanced catheter-based techniques through modern technological interventions such as intravascular imaging and invasive physiology to help guide stent selection, placement, and deployment. His expertise extends to addressing coronary artery disease, heart valve disorders, peripheral artery disease, heart failure, abnormal heart rhythm as well as heart disease prevention. He also performs transesophageal echocardiography, cardiac stress testing, implantation of heart monitoring, and pacemaker devices. He is board-certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine for Internal Medicine and Cardiovascular Diseases as well as the Certification Board of Nuclear Cardiology, and the National Board of Echocardiography.

ElBebawy

Golla

Dr. Golla specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery disease, heart failure, arrhythmia, pericardial disease, valvular heart disease, preventive cardiology peripheral vascular disease, superficial and deep venous problems, renal artery stenosis, abdominal aortic aneurysm, carotid artery disease, and arterio-venous fistulae problems. He holds multiple board certifications, which include the American Board of Endovascular Interventions, American Board of Vascular Medicine, Registered Physician in Vascular Interpretation, American Board of Internal Medicine-Interventional Cardiology, American Board of Internal Medicine-Cardiovascular Medicine, American Board of Internal Medicine-Internal Medicine, Certification Board of Nuclear Cardiology, Certification Board of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography, and the National Board of Echocardiography. Dr. Golla is also the director of Cardiovascular Medicine at GRMC.

GRMC's Cardiovascular team also includes nurse practitioner Carla Haddock of the Heart Failure Clinic, interventional cardiologist Dr. Alejandro Prieto, general cardiologist Dr. Robert Palusinksi, and electrophysiology cardiologist Dr. Marian Holland.

Those seeking cardiovascular services at GRMC will need a referral from their primary care physician or other specialist before making an appointment. For more information about GRMC's cardiovascular specialists and services, visit www.grmc.gu. You can also contact the Referral Management Office at (671) 633-GRMC (4762) or email refer@grmc.gu. ***(PR)***

Bank of Guam receives multiple MarCom awards

HAGÅTÑA, Guam—Bank of Guam has received six MarCom Awards, an internationally recognized competition celebrating excellence in marketing and communications. With over 6,500 entries from across the globe, Bank of Guam has stood out, securing awards in several categories.

This year's competition saw entries from various organizations, ranging from large multinational corporations to individual creative professionals and is judged by a panel of industry veterans.

Bank of Guam has been honored for the following campaigns:

Rebuild Stronger Every Day: This campaign includes all forms of communication from press releases, advertisements, and other deliverables developed in response to and during the aftermath of Typhoon Mawar.

■ Platinum in Integrated Marketing

■ Platinum in Crisis Communications/Response

■ Platinum in Crisis Communications/Public Relations Program

A Vision from the Past. A Plan for the Future. (2022 Year in Review): The bank's annual report highlighting 2022's performance and events from the BankGuam Holding Company, to include Bank of Guam, BankGuam Insurance, ASC Trust, and BG Investment Services. The theme of this award-winning report was based on the memoir, Jesus in Little America, written by Bank of Guam founder Jesus S. Leon Guerrero.

■ Gold in Annual Report

Hagåtña City Run & Block Party: This communications campaign worked to promote the Hagåtña City Run & Block Party, an event that helped raise funds for local non-profit organization, Guam Cancer Care. This campaign included advertising materials, public relations engagements, and other communications.

■ Gold in Communications Public Relations

Proud to Be Locally Owned: This multi-channel advertising campaign, launched during Super Bowl LVII, was an initiative to put a spotlight on local, game-changing small business owners. The campaign was a mosaic of inspiring stories, each told through a series of visual vignettes, capturing what it means to be a small business owner. These entrepreneurs, in their own authentic words, shared reflections on the challenges and triumphs they've experienced.

BOG

Bank of Guam receives national recognition with six MarCom Awards, an internationally recognized competition celebrating excellence in marketing and communications. Pictured from left are Kuramitsu Iwanaga, senior business analyst; Carla Duenas, Customer experience management officer; Ken Quintanilla, Community Relations manager; Mia O'Mallan, content manager; Audrey Diaz, creative manager; Danny Daniel, vice president, director of Brand and Community Relations; Kyle Perron, creative director, Mighty Island; Lesley-Anne Leon Guerrero, senior vice president, chief experience officer; Karen Gayle, product manager; Esther Reyes, vice president, senior product manager; Chartee Brennan, digital media content producer; Timothy Nauta, customer experience management officer; and Bonnie Alig, Human Resources utility officer III.

BOG

The MarCom Awards, sponsored and judged by the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals, is one of the world's oldest, largest, and most-respected creative competitions.

■ Honorable Mention in Integrated Marketing

Lesley-Anne Leon Guerrero, senior vice president and chief experience officer of the Bank of Guam, said the bank has been a longtime champion of local talent and artists "and we have been fortunate enough to work alongside so many within our community. Much of what we are being recognized for is a direct result of that collaboration and shared passion for our people and the commitment we have to sharing their stories."

She was echoed by Joaquin P.L.G. Cook, president and chief executive officer, said these wins are a huge testament "to our team's passion to developing campaigns and communications that genuinely connect with our people. These accolades inspire us to continue our pursuit of excellence in brand, marketing, and communications, while always striving to engage with our audience in meaningful ways."

The MarCom Awards, sponsored and judged by the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals, is one of the world's oldest, largest, and most-respected creative competitions. Winning a MarCom Award is a prestigious honor, reflecting peer recognition from the creative industry.

Bank of Guam's success in this competitive arena underscores its dedication to not only providing exceptional financial services but also to crafting meaningful and effective communications that resonate with its community and beyond.

For a full list of winners, visit marcomawards.com. ***(BOG)***

Radewagen highlights Pacific Islands Caucus activities

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Members of U.S. House of Representatives Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-AS), Rep. Ed Case (D-HI), and Delegate James Moylan (R-Guam)

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-AS) is highlighting the congressional activities of the bipartisan Pacific Islands Caucus, which she co-chairs. Efforts during 2023 emphasized U.S. commitment in the region, legislation and funding, and Congress' role in international partnerships in the Pacific.

"I appreciate my colleagues in the bipartisan Pacific Islands Caucus and the commitment we can show to the region together," said Radewagen. "We've gotten a lot done in relation to the Pacific Islands but there will be more to do in 2024, and I look forward to working with each dedicated co-chair and member of our caucus on behalf of the Pacific Islands, including our security, economies, and environmental priorities."

The Caucus's Year in Review with specific actions and legislative details is available at https://pacificislandscaucus-case.house.gov/media/blog-post/pacific-islands-caucus-2023-year-review. ***(PR)***

HS1 STEVEN ZEA:

Charting a course of compassionate care in the Blue Pacific

By CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER SARA MUIR
U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/ Sector Guam

In the vast oceanic stretches of the U.S. Coast Guard's 14th District and the Blue Pacific, skilled medical personnel like Petty Officer 1st Class Steven Zea on Fast Response Cutters, especially during expeditionary patrols, is not just a necessity; it's a lifeline.

These patrols routinely take crews well over 200 nautical miles from shore, venturing into remote and austere environments where quick and expert medical care is critical. Zea, an independent-duty health services technician serving as a medical support professional aboard U.S. Coast Guard platforms, illustrates the Service's dedication to safeguarding members' well-being.

"Being out here, on the vast Pacific, the realization of just how crucial our role is becoming even more evident," shared Zea. "Every day brings new challenges, and being able to provide medical support here is not just a duty; it's a calling."

A desire to acquire medical knowledge for his family's welfare fueled Zea's journey into the medical field. This personal quest has evolved into a profound commitment to serving his fellow Coast Guard members. Of Colombian descent, and he's a first-generation American raised in North Carolina, Zea's diverse background enriches his approach to medical care, bedside manners, and team dynamics.

Zea joined the Service to be an HS. After basic training, 2015 found him at the helm, breaking ice on the Hudson River aboard the USCGC *Sturgeon Bay* as a seaman. Fast forward to 2018, and he was an HS2 helping respond to the aftermath of Hurricane Michael in Florida while assigned to Training Center Petaluma, California. Thus, he's no stranger to deployments and emergency response.

The recent establishment of the U.S. Coast Guard Logistics Command Expeditionary Deployable Support Team demonstrates the U.S. Coast Guard's strategic shift to enhance field service capabilities. This initiative underscores a comprehensive approach to support, including critical medical services. Professionals like Zea are central to this team, ensuring robust health and safety protocols even in the most secluded operational areas.

A particularly poignant instance highlighting Zea's expertise surfaced during a joint law enforcement operation by the USCGC *Myrtle Hazard* (WPC 1139) and embedded law enforcement officers from Papua New Guinea while in the Coral Sea in September. Following a boarding on a foreign fishing vessel, a Coast Guard member suffered a significant leg injury in a ship-to-ship transfer. Zea's swift and adept intervention was pivotal.

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER SARA MUIR

Petty Officer 2nd Class Steven Zea, a deployed health services technician, observes operations aboard the USCGC *Myrtle Hazard* (WPC 1139) in the Coral Sea off Papua New Guinea on Aug. 25, 2023, during a 46-day expeditionary patrol.

"It was after sunset, and I was piped to the back deck. When I saw the member unable to put weight on the leg, I knew quick action was needed. Given our remote location, it was challenging, but we train for these moments. It's been three months, and the member is doing well," recalls Zea.

His effective management of the injury not only facilitated the member's initial recovery but also supported the continued success of the mission. The joint patrol marked a significant first with Papua New Guinea as the operations came on the heels of signing a bilateral law enforcement agreement between Papua New Guinea and the U.S. to counter illicit maritime activity, particularly illegal fishing, and protect their sovereignty inside the nation's exclusive economic zone.

Zea's aspirations don't just lie in the present. "I'm deeply passionate about medications and their effects. I see myself delving more into this field, possibly pursuing pharmacy school. There's so much more to learn and share," he reflects.

U.S. Coast Guard HSs are in demand, and there needs to be more of them. Participation in these long-distance deployments on FRCs is critical despite the platform not being billeted for an HS. The original planning had the crews operating within 200 nautical miles; in most places, a higher level of medical care is more accessible.

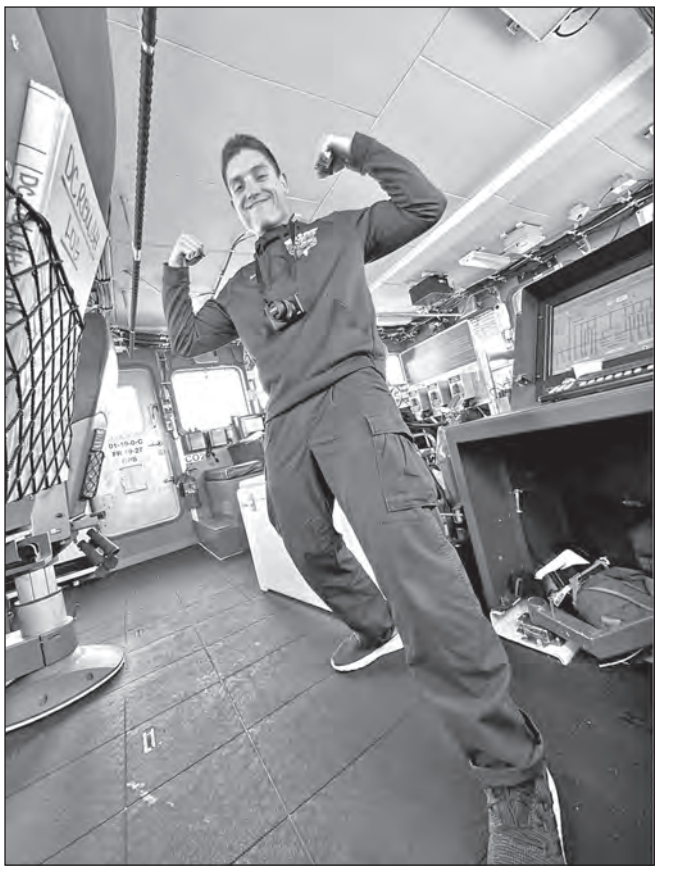
The U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam collaboration with U.S. Naval Hospital Guam has been a cornerstone in elevating the medical capabilities of these cutters when HSs are in short supply. It is an alternate option to increase the care available to FRC crews. In the past 20 months, this partnership has seen several Hospital Corpsmen from the hospital embark on missions with the U.S. Coast Guard, enhancing the medical expertise available aboard. However, HSs remain the gold standard and, in many cases, are more experienced with additional training than their U.S. Navy counterparts.

Zea's story is more than a tale of medical interventions; it's about the profound trust and reassurance he brings to the crews. Always willing to pitch in, he handled lines, stood watch, competed in Super Smash Bros. tourneys, and provided consistent care. Knowing they have a like-minded professional like Zea aboard, ready to tackle medical emergencies, the crew can confidently concentrate on their vital missions. Serving the people of the Blue Pacific also provides exposure to new cultural experiences.

"Visiting places like the Republic of Palau, Papua New Guinea, and Australia has been an eye-opening experience. Celebrating Papua New Guinea's Independence Day was a deep cultural immersion and learning moment. Each of these places has its unique charm and challenges, and being able to provide medical support here has enriched my understanding of diverse healthcare needs. It's a reminder of how interconnected we are and the Coast Guard's vital role in not just security but also in cultural and humanitarian exchanges," said Zea.

Zea and his peers in medical support are the unsung guardians of the U.S. Coast Guard's expeditionary teams. Their expertise, unwavering dedication, and adaptability are crucial not only in ensuring the health and safety of their comrades but also in upholding the operational integrity of the Service's critical missions across the Pacific.

U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam is responsible for safeguarding U.S. waters in the Oceania region, ensuring maritime safety, security, and environmental protection. The Coast Guard collaborates with Pacific partners and stakeholders to uphold the highest standards of maritime excellence. ***(USCG)***



CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER SARA MUIR

Petty Officer 2nd Class Steven Zea, a deployed health services technician, stands for a photo aboard the USCGC *Myrtle Hazard* (WPC 1139) in the Coral Sea off Papua New Guinea on Aug. 25, 2023, during a 46-day expeditionary patrol.

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER SARA MUIR

Petty Officer 2nd Class Steven Zea, a deployed health services technician (lower left), stands for a photo with the deck force aboard the USCGC *Myrtle Hazard* (WPC 1139) as they depart Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, on Aug. 31, 2023, during a 46-day expeditionary patrol.

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER SARA MUIR

Petty Officer 2nd Class Steven Zea, a deployed health services technician, participates in a bridge briefing aboard the USCGC *Myrtle Hazard* (WPC 1139) off Papua New Guinea on Aug. 31, 2023, during a 46-day expeditionary patrol.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXIV, Issue No. 2

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
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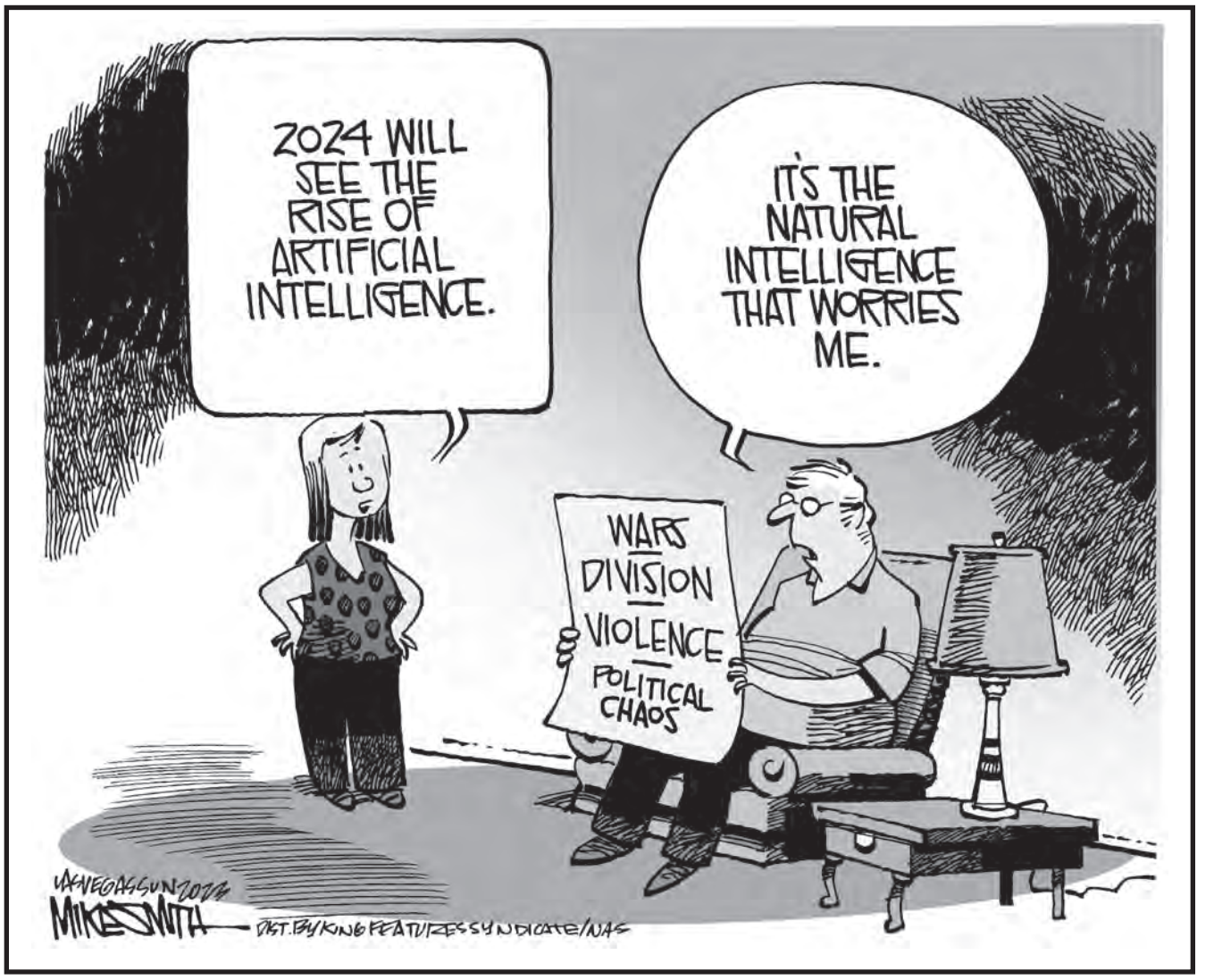

EDITORIAL

Republicans should be honest about election interference

In recent weeks, Congress has stripped a senator of his committee chairmanship pending a bribery investigation, expelled a House member for egregious frauds, and fired a staffer for making a sex tape in a committee room—all for the good, given the embarrassment each has brought on the institution. But there are deeper ethics challenges facing Congress, as the case of Representative Elise Stefanik shows.

Stefanik, the fourth-ranking Republican in the House, has filed an ethics complaint against a federal judge, Beryl Howell. The judge's alleged offense? At a dinner held by the Women's White Collar Defense Association, Howell reportedly said the following: "We are having a very surprising and downright troubling moment in this country when the very importance of facts is dismissed, or ignored."

Howell, who oversaw a number of cases relating to the mob that stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, also spoke about the effect of "big lies" on those who have been sentenced for crimes arising from that day. She quoted a new book by a historian about the struggle between democracy and authoritarianism: "Big lies are springboards for authoritarians."

Stefanik now wants Howell investigated for misconduct by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. She explained her reasoning this way: "Election interference by judges destroys public confidence in the federal judiciary, tears apart the fabric of our Republic, and is illegal. It must end now."

Rather unintentionally, Stefanik's complaint perfectly underscored Howell's concern about facts being dismissed. The fact is: It was judges who prevented illegal election interference by then-President Donald Trump and his associates, some of whom have already pleaded guilty to related crimes. And it was judges—including many appointed by Trump himself—who heard all the evidence presented by the former president's lawyers and unanimously concluded that the 2020 election had been conducted lawfully.

Stefanik seems to have no quarrel with any of the actual election interferers and certainly not with Trump, whose campaign for president she is ardently supporting. Instead, she charged that Howell's sky-is-blue commentary was a "partisan speech" that was "obviously highly inappropriate election interference."

In trying to redefine election enforcement as election interference, and concern about lies as evidence of partisanship, Stefanik is sowing the very distrust in the judicial system that she claims to be attacking. It's as if she's channeling Alice in Wonderland: "If I had a world of my own, everything would be nonsense. Nothing would be what it is, because everything would be what it isn't."

Judges should, of course, take pains to avoid the appearance of partisanship, and the court system should hold them accountable. The erosion of public trust in the judiciary undermines faith in the rule of law, including the administration of elections and their results. That a recent Colorado court decision to bar Trump from the ballot in 2024 was a 4-3 decision, with the Republican chief judge in dissent, will only exacerbate the problem.

But attempting to punish judges for expressing legitimate concern about encroaching authoritarianism is itself a form of authoritarianism. The sooner this and similar efforts are repudiated,

See REPUBLICANS on Page 9

How were so many economists so wrong about the recession?

BY TYLER COWEN
Bloomberg Opinion

Tyler Cowen is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist, a professor of economics at George Mason University and host of the* Marginal Revolution *blog.*

Last year at this time, 85% of economists in one poll predicted a recession this year—and that was an optimistic take compared to the 100% probability of a recession forecast two months earlier. Meanwhile Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, drawing upon the work of his highly able staff, expressed fear in March that bringing down the rate of inflation would cost millions of American jobs.

And yet none of this has happened. Both inflation and unemployment are headed in the right direction, and most economists expect the U.S. to avoid a recession in 2024. Economists have yet to figure out why things went so well, but it is already clear that a reckoning is due.

As Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said recently: "So many economists were saying there's no way for inflation to get back to normal without it entailing a period of high unemployment, [or] a recession. And a year ago, I think many economists were saying a recession was inevitable. I've never felt there was a solid intellectual basis for making such a prediction."

Many of those economists may have been relying on the work of … Janet Yellen. Her own (highly regarded) macro research focuses on nominal price and wage stickiness and output-inflation trade-offs, predicting that if there is a significant fall in aggregate demand, employment should also fall, giving rise to a recession. She is also co-author (with many distinguished colleagues) of a well-known paper arguing that there is an output/inflation trade-off even at high rates of inflation.

Economist Christina Romer (often with co-authors) has provided some of the most persuasive evidence that negative monetary policy shocks induce recessions in output and employment. Her work has been especially influential—worthy of a Nobel Prize, in my opinion—because it does not rely on a complicated mathematical model of the economy, and it had been accepted on a bipartisan basis. Paul Krugman has been predicting for most of this year that the recent disinflation would not cause a recession, and he deserves credit for getting this right. Yet he is less keen to tell us that for many years he trumpeted the predictive virtues of old-style Keynesian macroeconomics, using models that predict disinflation will lead to a loss in output and employment.

Krugman has lately further explained his position—complete with unironic headline—suggesting that the untangling of broken supply chains had helped lower the rate of inflation. That point, too, is correct. He didn't mention that there also has been a massive negative shock to aggregate demand: High rates of M2 growth became slightly negative rates of M2 growth. Fiscal policy peaked and then retreated. The Fed raised interest rates from near-zero levels to the range of 5%, and fairly rapidly. It also sent every possible signal that it was going to be tight with monetary conditions.

And yet a recession did not come.

There is a reason that so many economists had been predicting a recession—and it is not because they are out of touch, or repeating talking points from Donald Trump's presidential campaign. They predicted a recession because that is what experts such as Yellen, Krugman, Romer and many others had been teaching for decades. I do not myself presume to have any immunity from the general confusion here, as all along I thought there was a reasonable chance of a recession.

Lawrence Summers turned out to be wrong in predicting that disinflation would have huge costs in terms of employment and output, and now he is catching grief for this on social media. Yet at least he was drawing upon a consistent model. The problem is that the real world is not as consistent as model builders might like.

The solution here is not to sweep past doctrine under the rug; it's to be more forthright. Macroeconomists very often don't know what is going on, and that holds true for all the different styles and flavors of macro.

The one theory that might at least partly explain recent events—that of a credible disinflation based on rational expectations—had fallen out of favor with economists, most of all the Keynesians. This approach still is receiving very little credit, even though it has the Nobel prizes of Robert E. Lucas and Thomas Sargent to support it.

Most of all, it's important to acknowledge how politicized macroeconomics has become. There are a bunch of economists going around right now saying they were right about how the U.S. would avoid a recession this year. A deeper look, however, reveals a much longer and less favorable story.

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Only patriotism can save the US from nationalism

BY ANDREAS KLUTH
Bloomberg Opinion

Andreas Kluth is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist covering U.S. diplomacy, national security and geopolitics. Previously, he was editor-in-chief of* Handelsblatt Global *and a writer for the* Economist.

It's patriotism when love of your own people comes first; it's nationalism when hate for people other than your own comes first. That definition comes from Charles de Gaulle, a former national hero and president of France. It's worth keeping in mind as we enter an election year in the U.S., the most consequential country of many where these two deceptively similar and yet utterly contrary forces will clash.

De Gaulle was onto something subtle but big. Patriotism, when you observe that warm feeling welling up inside of you, is fundamentally positive. By contrast, nationalism, whenever you perceive that emotion in you (and we all do on occasion), is negative and potentially jingoistic.

Political scientists describe this distinction as "inclusive" patriotism versus "exclusive" nationalism. In biblical terms, the Book of Ruth (in which the Israelites embrace a Moabite woman as one of their own) is patriotic; other parts, such as Deuteronomy 25:17–19 (in which the Lord tells the Israelites to blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven), are nationalistic.

Nationalism, unlike patriotism, needs an Other as a target of its primary energy source, which isn't pride but resentment. That Other can be foreign or domestic. In the past as today, the role has often fallen to outside foes but also, say, to immigrants, Jews or political enemies at home. So it's not patriotic but nationalistic to extol a "real America," with the implication of an unworthy and "unreal" alternative. And it's vile to claim—as Donald Trump, a self-declared nationalist who's running for a second term as president, recently did—that illegal immigrants are "poisoning the blood of our country."

George Orwell concluded that nationalism was "inseparable from the desire for power," even at the cost of obsession and self-deception. Patriotism, by contrast, is as likely to be cooperative as combative. After all, patriots want their country to thrive, which is best done in harmony with other people, whether those are domestic groups or foreign countries (whose trade and investment can make your own nation wealthier, for example). That's why the world's preeminent multilateral forum is called the United Nations—not, say, the World Union—a nuance that eludes nationalists who disdain the UN as a talking shop for "globalists."

As different as they are, though, patriotism and nationalism easily become conflated. I've thought a lot about that phenomenon, because as a dual citizen of the U.S. and Germany, I've encountered the different ways in which my two countries confuse the concepts.

Postwar West Germany accepted that the Third Reich's hyper-nationalism (the "Naz" in Nazism) was evil and had caused nothing but suffering, genocide and destruction. The reborn country therefore aspired to be "post-national," atoning for its past and aspiring to a higher—supranational and therefore European—identity.

Along the way, however, the West Germans confused their new post-nationalism with anti-patriotism. Waving or even showing flags was rare and frowned upon, as was singing the anthem in sports stadiums. Soldiers of the Bundeswehr were spat on in the streets when wearing uniforms around town. The turning point only came as late as 2006, when Germany hosted the soccer World Cup. The Germans placed third in that tournament, but set psycho-emotional records in the joyful—and ebulliently inclusive—celebration of their own team and flag alongside those from across the world.

My other country, the U.S., is in the opposite default state. Here, flags flutter everywhere, from houses to cars and clothes; the anthem is played at almost every high-school game, and most people not only stand for it but place their hands on their hearts. When pilots learn that a soldier is on their flight, they announce it to the cabin, which erupts in applause and cheering.

The post-nationalist anti-patriotism of West Germany was neither healthy nor sustainable. Too many Germans couldn't maintain the rituals of national shame. In a psychological ricochet, some became susceptible to a new nationalism, which today manifests in the record popularity of a far-right and xenophobic political party called the Alternative for Germany, which polls around 20%.

By contrast, the genuine patriotism of the U.S. too easily becomes contaminated with a messianic exceptionalism that tempts Americans to ignore or gloss over the dark chapters in their history. Even if the narrative of liberty dominates, the truth also includes mass enslavement, ethnic cleansing of indigenous peoples, and episodes of Otherization such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of the late 19th century and the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II—and of course the racism that many Americans of color still encounter in everyday life. A patriotic culture that is selectively and deliberately blind to reality can turn into nationalism, such as the White or Christian variants increasingly in vogue on the American right.

The tension between patriotism and nationalism is also playing out across much of the world. In Poland, a nationalist party has for years been stoking resentments at Brussels, Germany, Russia and LGBTQ+ people, but has now been replaced by a patriotic government that wants to make Poland inclusive and open again to the world. In next-door Hungary, a hyper-nationalist prime minister, Viktor Orban, vilifies domestic Others while provoking neighboring countries with maps of "Greater Hungary" that include chunks of Ukraine, Romania, Slovakia and Serbia. Nationalism is also on the rise from Turkey and India to China and beyond.

Owing to its global stature, though, the U.S. is more likely than any other country to bend the arc of history. And here, voters in the primaries, and then in the general election, will incessantly hear both kinds of entreaty in the coming months, the nationalist and the patriotic.

Some candidates will pander to voters' resentments. Others will appeal to ideals such as truth, civility and tolerance. Some will postulate American decline and promise renewed Greatness. Others will celebrate the greatness of America as it is. Some will demand loyalty to themselves and their group. Others will ask for loyalty to the republic and its constitution. All will drape themselves in red, white and blue. But some will be nationalists, others patriots. And then, come November, just one of them will win.

What I wish for in 2024: Hope in the face of a grim foreign policy outlook

BY TRUDY RUBIN
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial-board member for the Philadelphia Inquirer. *Readers may write to her at:* Philadelphia Inquirer, *P.O. Box 8263, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101, or by email at trubin@phillynews.com.*

Almost everything I hope for when it comes to foreign policy in 2024 seems outlandishly Pollyannaish. But a person has the right to dream, don't they? So here goes.

I hope that Ronald Reagan will pay a supernatural New Year's visit to Washington, to enlighten MAGA isolationists on how Vladimir Putin is brilliantly playing them and Donald Trump.

Reagan—for all his weak spots—understood how to play hardball with the Kremlin and would be astonished at the blindness of his current GOP confreres. Reagan would never have embraced Trump's delusions that he could hand Ukraine over to Putin without strengthening the Russian dictator in his dangerous belief that America is a spent global power.

In case Reagan's ghost doesn't materialize, I'm also hoping President Joe Biden finally grasps that he must enable Ukraine to destroy Russian forces this year—before the GOP delivers Kyiv to Putin. Biden deserves kudos for helping Kyiv hold off Moscow's superior forces for two years, but the slow drip of U.S. aid has left Ukraine's ground forces in a stalemate.

Yet, Ukraine's daring fighters have scored dramatic successes against Russia's Black Sea navy; last week they destroyed a Russian ship at a port in occupied Crimea. Early 2024 is the moment for Biden to finally deliver the long-range ATACMS missiles he keeps refusing, as well as the F-16s and everything else Kyiv needs to push the Russians out of Crimea and ensure their defeat.

I am hoping that sane Senate Republicans and Democrats come up with a desperately needed formula for asylum reform on the southern border, but, in my dreams, it shouldn't be tied to Ukraine aid.

Meantime, I am hoping (but not hopeful) that the government of Israel's highly unpopular Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will fall. Otherwise, the Israeli leader's policies are likely to drag his country into a disastrous reoccupation of Gaza and ensure that most Israeli hostages are killed in the fighting while laying waste to the entire Gaza Strip.

Yes, Israel needs to punish the Hamas terrorists for their heinous attack on Oct. 7. Yet the current war strategy is unlikely to destroy Hamas' vast underground tunnel network or catch its top leaders, even as it kills thousands of Palestinian civilians.

Even if Biden puts more pressure on Netanyahu to end the war sooner, I fear he will refuse. As his many Israeli critics point out, the longer the war extends, the longer Netanyahu can avoid taking responsibility for the government's prewar security failures. And the longer he can stave off his multiple trials for corruption.

Not only do Netanyahu's policies undermine his country's future security, but they dash any hope that this brutal war can lead to a diplomatic formula that addresses the broader issues that underlie the fighting—the political future of the Palestinian people or even the future of the Gaza Strip.

Most of all, however, I'm hoping a majority of U.S. voters in 2024 will recognize that, like the emperor in the old fairy tale, the wannabe dictator Trump "has nothing on" except his ego. When it comes to foreign policy, he failed miserably on almost every issue as president.

Openly admiring dictators, he was fooled by Putin and by North Korea's Kim Jong Un—who built up his nuclear arsenal even as Trump bragged of the "love letters" between them. Trump's policy on China, based only on raising tariffs, failed to make any progress on wider security issues.

It was Trump who signed the surrender agreement with the Taliban. Trump's Mideast policies wrongly assumed that the Palestinian political issue could be ignored indefinitely. His proposed draconian trade tariffs would cost American jobs, raise prices, and further antagonize allies.

Putin is openly rooting for a GOP victory in 2024 because he expects Trump's global policies will undermine democracies around the world and strengthen dictators like him. I hope his expectations will be proven categorically wrong.

REPUBLICANS

From page 9

the sooner the public can go back to worrying about crooks taking bribes, fraudsters stealing funds and perverts exposing themselves. You know: normal politics.

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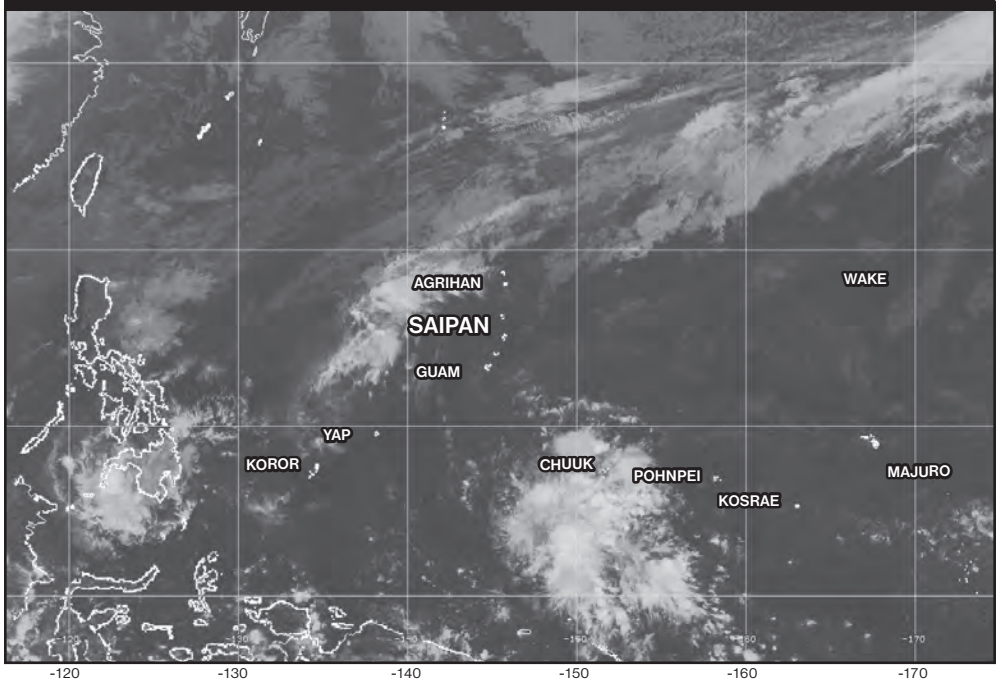
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy. Isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Breezy. Mostly sunny with a 10 percent chance of showers.	Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of showers.
86 78°	86 78°	86 78°	86 78°	86 78°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:33 AM TUESDAY, JANUARY 2, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite shows partly sunny skies in the Marianas this morning, with only a few showers up north and low-end scattered showers toward the south. The buoys reveal combined seas of 6 to 8 feet composed of a medium size east swell, a small north swell, and east wind waves.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	84° / 76°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	84° / 78°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	85° / 78°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	84° / 79°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	85° / 78°
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	85° / 80°

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	70° / 61°
Beijing	Sunny	43° / 19°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	70° / 64°
Honolulu	Windy	80° / 72°
London	Mosty Cloudy	54° / 48°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	77° / 49°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	88° / 75°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	88° / 72°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	77° / 70°
New York	Partly Cloudy	42° / 24°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	54° / 43°
Paris	Cloudy	55° / 52°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	46° / 32°
Rome	Sunny	55° / 34°
Salem	Sunny	62° / 36°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	53° / 48°
Seoul	Sunny	36° / 21°
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	57° / 39°
Washington, DC	Windy	44° / 24°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:43 AM	5:58 PM
Thursday	6:43 AM	5:59 PM
Friday	6:43 AM	5:59 PM
Saturday	6:43 AM	6:00 PM
Sunday	6:44 AM	6:00 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	11:33 AM	11:53 PM
Thursday	-	12:06 PM	-
Friday	12:40 AM	12:40 PM	-
Saturday	1:28 AM	1:17 PM	-
Sunday	2:20 AM	1:58 PM	-

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
6:02 AM	Low Tide	0.22
1:05 PM	High Tide	1.57
7:46 PM	Low Tide	0.70
-	-	-

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2024

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	3:10AM	10:30PM	4, 7 via ICN
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily
OZ626	3:10AM	6:55AM	4,7
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
OZ702/625	12:05PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6 via ICN
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily
OZ625	8:20PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

US seizes more illegal e-cigarettes, but thousands of new ones launching

WASHINGTON (AP)—Federal officials are seizing more shipments of unauthorized electronic cigarettes at U.S. ports, but thousands of new flavored products continue pouring into the country from China, according to government and industry data reviewed by The Associated Press.

The figures underscore the chaotic state of the nation's $7 billion vaping market and raise questions about how the U.S. government can stop the flow of fruit-flavored disposable e-cigarettes used by 1 in 10 American teens and adolescents.

More than 11,500 unique vaping products are being sold in U.S. stores, up 27% from 9,000 products in June, according to tightly held industry data from analytics firm Circana.

"FDA whacks one product and then the manufacturers get around it and the kids get around it," said Bonnie Halpern-Felsher, a Stanford University psychologist who develops anti-vaping educational materials. "It's too easy to change your product a little bit and just relaunch it."

Halpern-Felsher says she is "constantly" updating her curriculum to keep pace with new vaping brands and trends.

Nearly all the new products are disposable e-cigarettes, according to the sales data gathered from gas stations, convenience stores and other shops. The products generated $3.2 billion in the first 11 months of this year.

AP

Varieties of disposable flavored electronic cigarette devices manufactured by EB Design, formerly known as Elf Bar, are displayed at a store in Pinecrest, Fla., Monday, June 26, 2023.

The FDA has authorized a handful of e-cigarettes for adult smokers and is still reviewing products from several major companies, including Juul. Regulators consider nearly all other e-cigarettes to be illegal.

"Those committing illegal acts don't advertise their crimes, and those trying to import illegal tobacco products into the United States are no different," said FDA's tobacco director, Brian King, in a written response to AP questions. "The FDA and our federal partners are using tools, like import alerts, to stop these illegal tobacco products at the border and to deter countless others."

The rise in e-cigarettes sold continues despite a record number of products detained.

An FDA database shows officials "refused" entry to 148 containers or pallets of "tobacco" goods last month, consisting almost entirely of vaping products from China. Refused imports are typically destroyed.

Through the end of November, U.S. officials had refused 374 such shipments this year, more than double the 118 refused in 2022.

This year's items included $400,000 worth of Esco Bars, a disposable brand placed on a list of banned imports in May. The agency's posted data is often preliminary because it takes time to finalize refusals.

But recent history shows how easily companies can maneuver around import bans.

In July 2022, the FDA barred dozens of e-cigarettes from Chinese manufacturer Fume, including flavors Pineapple Ice and Blue Razz.

Fume sales dipped after the ban, but the company launched a slew of new products, posting $42 million in U.S. sales in the third quarter of 2023, the data shows. Roughly 98% of sales came from products not on the FDA's "red list" of products that can be detained.

Industry shipping tactics are also challenging the usefulness of import restrictions.

In July, FDA and customs officials intercepted $18 million worth of illegal vapes, including leading brand Elf Bar. But the shipments were mislabeled as shoes, toys and other items—not e-cigarettes—requiring officials to individually open and verify the contents of more than two dozen containers.

Circana, formerly IRI, restricts access to its data, which it sells to companies and researchers. A person not authorized to share it gave the AP access on condition of anonymity.

The FDA has no schedule for updating its import lists but said it is "closely monitoring" instances where companies try to avoid detection.

"The FDA has a variety of tools at our disposal to take action against these tactics," FDA's King said.

The agency has limited powers to penalize foreign companies. Instead, regulators have sent hundreds of warning letters to U.S. stores selling their products, but those are not legally binding.

States, Congress wrestle with cybersecurity at water utilities

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP)—The tiny Aliquippa water authority in western Pennsylvania was perhaps the least-suspecting victim of an international cyberattack.

It had never had outside help in protecting its systems from a cyberattack, either at its existing plant that dates to the 1930s or the new $18.5 million one it is building.

Then it—along with several other water utilities—was struck by what federal authorities say are Iranian-backed hackers targeting a piece of equipment specifically because it was Israeli-made.

"If you told me to list 10 things that would go wrong with our water authority, this would not be on the list," said Matthew Mottes, the chairman of the authority that handles water and wastewater for about 22,000 people in the woodsy exurbs around a one-time steel town outside Pittsburgh.

The hacking of the Municipal Water Authority of Aliquippa is prompting new warnings from U.S. security officials at a time when states and the federal government are wrestling with how to harden water utilities against cyberattacks.

The danger, officials say, is hackers gaining control of automated equipment to shut down pumps that supply drinking water or contaminate drinking water by reprogramming automated chemical treatments. Besides Iran, other potentially hostile geopolitical rivals, including China, are viewed by U.S. officials as a threat.

A number of states have sought to step up scrutiny, although water authority advocates say the money and the expertise are what is really lacking for a sector of more than 50,000 water utilities, most of which are local authorities that, like Aliquippa's, serve corners of the country where residents are of modest means and cybersecurity professionals are scarce.

Besides, utilities say, it's difficult to invest in cybersecurity when upkeep of pipes and other water infrastructure is already underfunded, and some cybersecurity measures have been pushed by private water companies, sparking pushback from public authorities that it is being used as a back door to privatization.

Efforts took on new urgency in 2021 when the federal government's leading cybersecurity agency reported five attacks on water authorities over two years, four of them ransomware and a fifth by a former employee.

At the Aliquippa authority, Iranian hackers shut down a remotely controlled device that monitors and regulates water pressure at a pumping station. Customers weren't affected because crews alerted by an alarm quickly switched to manual operation — but not every water authority has a built-in manual backup system.

Tsubaki Tower raises thousands for UOG foundation

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Joel Davis, assistant general manager, The Tsubaki Tower; Ken Yanagisawa, incoming president, P.H.R. Ken Micronesia, and general manager, The Tsubaki Tower; Dr. Anita Borja Enriquez, president, University of Guam; Vincent "Ben" Cruz, Military, Corporate Sales, and Community PR manager, The Tsubaki Tower; and Katrina T. Perez, executive director, UOG Endowment Foundation.

TUMON, Guam—The Tsubaki Tower presented a check for $8,253 to the University of Guam's Endowment Foundation last Dec. 11, 2023, in support of the foundation's annual "G is for Giving" campaign and scholarship drive.

The donation was the result of a commitment The Tsubaki Tower made to make a donation for every guest who dined at Casa Oceano, the resort's all-day dining restaurant, throughout November 2023.

UOG president Dr. Anita Borja Enriquez received the check on behalf of the university. "We are extremely grateful to The Tsubaki Tower Guam for its generous scholarship contributions to support our University of Guam students. Their partnership with the UOG Endowment Foundation supports our College Affordability Initiative," she said.

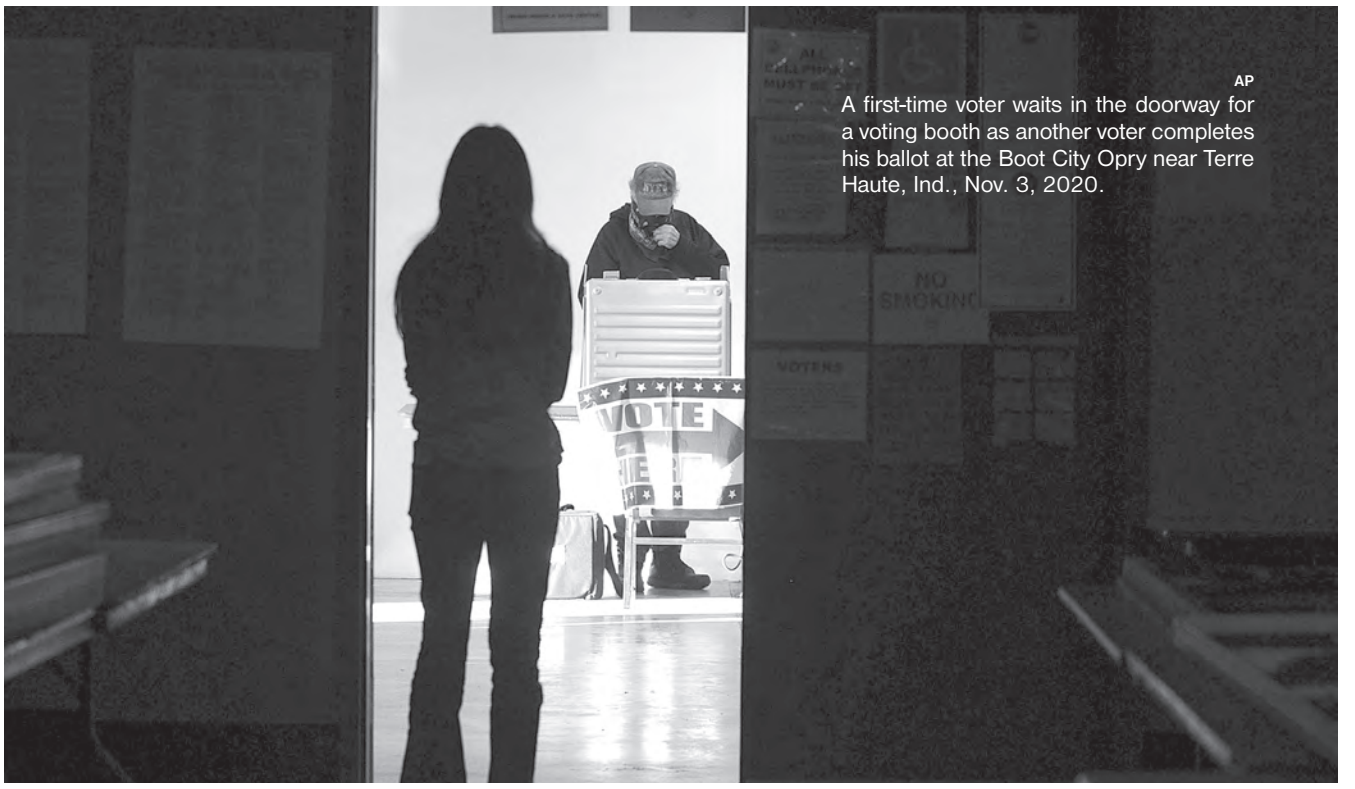
UOG's "G is for Giving" program launched in 2017 and raises funds each year for academic scholarships. To date, the campaign has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarship funding.

Ken Yanagisawa, president of P.H.R. Ken Micronesia, Inc. and general manager of The Tsubaki Tower, said his team was proud to support the "G is for Giving" campaign, which allowed the resort to raise money to support students who may consider future employment in tourism and the hospitality industry.

"UOG is a vital partner for Guam's tourism industry, and we are pleased to support this campaign," he said. "On behalf of our company, team, and customers, we present this check as an investment in the next generation of hoteliers and tourism professionals. We encourage other companies to call UOG to learn how they can support the university and its students in a meaningful way." ***(PR)***

Nation

Biden, Trump poised for potential rematch that could shake US politics



AP
A first-time voter waits in the doorway for a voting booth as another voter completes his ballot at the Boot City Opry near Terre Haute, Ind., Nov. 3, 2020.

LACONIA, N.H. (AP)—U.S. presidential elections have been rocked in recent years by economic disaster, stunning gaffes, secret video and a pandemic. But for all the tumult that defined those campaigns, the volatility surrounding this year's presidential contest has few modern parallels, posing profound challenges to the future of American democracy.

Not since the Supreme Court effectively decided the 2000 campaign in favor of Republican George W. Bush has the judiciary been so intertwined with presidential politics.

In the coming weeks, the high court is expected to weigh whether states can ban former President Donald Trump from the ballot for his role in leading the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. Meanwhile, a federal appeals court is weighing Trump's argument that he's immune from prosecution. The maneuvers are unfolding as prosecutors from New York to Washington and Atlanta move forward with 91 indictments across four criminal cases involving everything from Trump's role in the insurrection to his efforts to overturn the 2020 election and his hush money paid to a porn actress.

On the Democratic side, President Joe Biden is seeking reelection as the high inflation that defined much of his first term seems to be easing. But that has done little to assuage restless voters or ease widespread concerns in both parties that, at 81, he's simply too old for the job. And at least three serious candidates who have launched outsider presidential bids threaten to scramble the campaign and eat into the support from independent voters who were critical to Biden's success in 2020.

Facing such uncertainty, few expect the traditional rules of politics to apply in 2024. Jim Messina, who managed former President Barack Obama's reelection, said Trump could very well defeat Biden next fall, even if the former president is in prison.

"We just don't know," Messina said. "Everyone in the world knows, especially me, that this election is going to be really, really close."

One of the few certainties at this point is that Biden is on track to be the Democratic nominee again, facing only token opposition in this year's primary despite overwhelming concerns within his own party about his physical and mental fitness. And though a few rivals are fighting furiously to stop Trump, he is well positioned to win the GOP nomination for the third consecutive election.

The strength of the GOP opposition to Trump will become more clear on Jan. 15 when the Iowa caucuses launch the nomination process. Trump holds a commanding lead in most national polls, although former U.N. ambassador Nikki Haley and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis are fighting to stop him. Allies of DeSantis and Haley privately concede that their best chance to wrestle the nomination from Trump would come in a long-shot push for a contested convention in Wisconsin this July.

Public polling strongly suggests that voters do not want a rematch between Trump and Biden.

Most U.S. adults overall (56%) would be "very" or "somewhat" dissatisfied with Biden as the Democratic presidential nominee in 2024, according to a poll conducted last month by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. A similar majority (58%) said they would be very or somewhat dissatisfied with Trump as the GOP's pick.

Perhaps because of such apathy, some voters simply don't believe Biden and Trump will end up on the general election ballot, despite strong evidence to the contrary. That's an idea that conservative strategist Sarah Longwell, who founded the Republican Accountability Project, says she hears regularly during weekly focus groups with voters across the political spectrum.

"Voters really aren't thinking about it, so they don't see the thing that's coming right at us—the most likely scenario, which is Trump vs. Biden," Longwell said. "But Trump is so dangerous. ... I wish the level of urgency from everybody matched the reality of where we are headed."

While concerns about Biden are centered on his age, Trump has increasingly embraced authoritarian messages that serve as clear warnings of his plans to dismantle democratic norms if he returns to the White House.

ACROSS THE NATION

A Colorado mother suspected of killing 2 of her children makes court appearance in London

LONDON (AP)—A Colorado mother suspected of killing two of her young children and injuring a third made an initial court appearance Monday in London, where she was arrested over the weekend. Kimberlee Singler, 35, was held after her initial appearance in Westminster Magistrates' Court. She has a Jan. 29 hearing scheduled on whether she should be be extradited to the United States to face two counts of first-degree murder, one count of attempted murder, three counts of child abuse and one count of assault. Singler disappeared as Colorado police prepared to arrest her in the deaths of her 9-year-old daughter and 7-year-old son, who were found slain Dec. 19 during what was reported as a burglary. Singler had minor injuries and a wounded 11-year-old daughter was hospitalized for several days before being released. Singler was initially treated as a crime victim and had cooperated with police. But officers could not locate her when they went to arrest her Dec. 26. Police nabbed her Saturday in the Kensington section of London. She had been in a long-running legal dispute over the children with her ex-husband, according to court records. The victims were Aden Wentz, 7, and Elianna "Ellie" Wentz, 9, Colorado television station KDVR-TV reported Monday, based on a statement from their father, Kevin Wentz, who said he was cooperating with investigators.

3 killed and several wounded in separate shootings early New Year's Day in Los Angeles area

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Two people were killed and eight others were wounded in a shooting early New Year's Day at a party in a commercial neighborhood of downtown Los Angeles, authorities said. Officers responding to reports of a shooting around 1 a.m. Monday heard gunfire and found a crowd fleeing the area and several wounded people lying on the street and sidewalk, police said in a news release. A man and woman died at the scene, police said. Officials initially said three people had been hospitalized but an afternoon update reported eight wounded. Their conditions weren't known Monday evening. Investigators believe the shooting stemmed from a dispute at the party, held in an industrial area with warehouses and commercial buildings. No information on any suspects was immediately available. Meanwhile, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department was investigating a separate shooting that killed a woman and wounded four other people early Monday in the city of Hawthorne. One of the victims was hospitalized in critical condition and the three others were listed as stable, KABC-TV reported. There were no arrests and no information about suspects.

Train derails and catches fire near San Francisco, causing minor injuries and service disruptions

ORINDA, Calif. (AP)—Several people suffered minor injuries and service was disrupted when a commuter train derailed and caught fire on New Year's Day in the San Francisco Bay Area, officials said. The Bay Area Rapid Transit train had just left Orinda on its way to Lafayette around 9 a.m. Monday when the front two cars went off the track, agency spokesperson Jim Allison said. All passengers were evacuated and fire crews quickly extinguished flames in two cars, he said. Several passengers were taken to hospitals with minor injuries, Allison said. The total number of people injured wasn't immediately known. The remaining passengers walked back to Orinda Station.

NJ mayor says buses of migrants bound for NY being dropped off at NJ train stations

SECAUCUS, N.J. (AP)18—A New Jersey mayor says buses of migrants bound for New York City have been stopping at the train station in his town and others in an apparent effort to evade an executive order by New York's mayor trying to regulate how and when migrants can be dropped off in the city.

Secaucus Mayor Michael Gonnelli said Sunday that Secaucus police and town officials had been told by Hudson County officials about the arrival of buses at the train station in Secaucus Junction beginning Saturday. He said four buses were believed to have arrived and dropped off migrants who then took trains into New York City.

Gonnelli said the executive order signed recently by Mayor Eric Adams of New York requires bus operators to provide at least 32 hours' advance notice of arrivals and to limit the hours of drop-off times.

"It seems quite clear the bus operators are finding a way to thwart the requirements of the executive order by dropping migrants at the train station in Secaucus and having them continue to their final destination," Gonnelli said in a statement. He suggested that the order may be "too stringent" and is resulting in "unexpected consequences."

Gonnelli called the tactic a "loophole" bus operators have found to allow migrants to reach New York City, and added that state police have reported that "this is now happening at train stations throughout the state." Gonnelli vowed to work with state and county officials and to "continue to monitor this situation closely."

A message posted on a social media account for Jersey City said the city's emergency management agency reports that "approximately 10 buses from various locations in Texas and one from Louisiana have arrived at various transit stations throughout the state, including Secaucus, Fanwood, Edison, Trenton." About 397 migrants had arrived at those locations since Saturday, the post Sunday said.

"This is clearly going to be a statewide conversation so it is important that we wait for some guidance from the governor here on next steps" as buses continue, the post said.

Tyler Jones, a spokesperson for New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy, told lehighvalleylive.com that New Jersey is being used as a transit point for migrants, almost all of whom continued on to New York City. Jones said New Jersey officials are "closely coordinating with federal and local officials "including our colleagues across the Hudson."

Asia

At least 30 dead in Japan quakes

AP

People walk by a building collapsed following an earthquake in Shikamachi, Ishikawa prefecture, Japan Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2024.

WAJIMA, Japan (AP)—A series of powerful earthquakes hit western Japan, leaving at least 30 people dead and damaging buildings, vehicles and boats, with officials warning people in some areas on Tuesday to stay away from their homes because of a risk of more strong quakes.

Aftershocks continued to shake Ishikawa prefecture and nearby areas a day after a magnitude 7.6 temblor slammed the area on Monday afternoon.

Thirty people were confirmed dead in Ishikawa, officials said. Seven others were seriously injured, while damage to homes was so great that it could not immediately be assessed, they said.

"Saving lives is our priority and we are fighting a battle against time," Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said Tuesday. "It is critical that people trapped in homes get rescued immediately."

A quake with a preliminary magnitude of 5.6 shook the area as he was speaking.

Japan's military dispatched 1,000 soldiers to the disaster zones to join rescue efforts, Kishida said, stressing they were facing "large-scale damage." Details of damaged homes were still under investigation, he said.

Firefighters were able to bring a fire under control in Wajima city which had reddened the sky with embers and smoke.

Nuclear regulators said several nuclear plants in the region were operating normally. A major quake and tsunami in March 2011 caused three reactors to melt and release large amounts of radiation at a nuclear plant in northeastern Japan.

News videos showed rows of collapsed houses. Some wooden structures were flattened and cars were overturned. Half-sunken ships floated in bays where tsunami waves had rolled in, leaving a muddied coastline.

On Monday, the Japan Meteorological Agency issued a major tsunami warning for Ishikawa and lower-level tsunami warnings or advisories for the rest of the western coast of Japan's main island of Honshu, as well as for the northern island of Hokkaido.

The warning was downgraded several hours later, and all tsunami warnings were lifted as of early Tuesday. Waves measuring more than one meter (3 feet) hit some places.

The agency warned that more major quakes could hit the area over the next few days.

People who were evacuated from their houses huddled in auditoriums, schools and community centers. Bullet trains in the region were halted, but service was being restored in some places. Sections of highways were closed, water pipes burst, and cellphone service was out in some areas.

Weather forecasters predicted rain, setting off worries about already crumbling buildings and infrastructure.

The region includes tourist spots famous for lacquerware and other traditional crafts, along with designated cultural heritage sites.

U.S. President Joe Biden said in a statement that his administration was "ready to provide any necessary assistance for the Japanese people."

S. Korean opposition leader stabbed in the neck by a knife-wielding man

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korean opposition leader Lee Jae-myung was stabbed in the neck by an unidentified knife-wielding man during a visit Tuesday to the southeastern city of Busan, police said.

Lee, head of the main opposition Democratic Party, was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment. Police and emergency officials said he was conscious and wasn't in critical condition, but his exact status was unknown.

The attack happened when Lee walked through a crowd of journalists and others after finishing a tour of the site of a new airport in Busan. The attacker, posing as a supporter, approached Lee, saying he wanted to get his autograph, and then stabbed Lee in the neck with a knife, according to Busan police.

Lee slumped to the ground, where a person pressed a handkerchief to his neck to stop the bleeding. A witness, Jin Jeonghwa, told YTN television that Lee bled a lot.

Videos circulated on social media showed the suspect, wearing a paper crown reading "I'm Lee Jae-myung," being chased and tackled by several people.

Police said officers arrested the man on the spot. During questioning, he refused to identify himself or say why he attacked Lee, according to Yonhap news agency.

Lee's Democratic Party called the incident "a terrorist attack on Lee and a serious threat to democracy." It called on police to make a through, swift investigation of the incident.

Party spokesperson Kwon Chil-seung told reporters at Pusan National University Hospital that Lee's jugular vein was believed to have been damaged and there was concern over the large amount of bleeding. He said Lee was being airlifted to a hospital in Seoul for surgery.

Hospital officials would not comment on Lee's condition.

President Yoon Suk Yeol expressed deep concern about Lee's health and ordered authorities to investigate the attack, saying such violence would not be tolerated, according to Yoon's office.

World

Israel is pulling thousands of troops from Gaza Strip

» In possible precursor to scaled-back offensive

JERUSALEM (AP)—The Israeli military confirmed Monday that it was pulling thousands of troops out of the Gaza Strip, a step that could clear the way for a new long-term phase of lower-intensity fighting against the Hamas militant group.

The confirmation of the planned troop drawdown came the same day that Israel's Supreme Court struck down a key component of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's contentious judicial overhaul plan. While the plan is not directly connected to the war effort, it was the source of deep divisions inside Israel and had threatened the military's readiness before the Oct. 7 Hamas attack that triggered the ongoing war.

Politicians warned against reigniting those divisions and harming the national unity that has prevailed throughout the Israel-Hamas war.

Netanyahu has vowed to press ahead with the military offensive until Hamas is crushed and the more than 100 hostages still held by the militant group in Gaza are freed.

But Israel has come under growing international pressure to scale back an offensive that has led to the deaths of nearly 22,000 Palestinians. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who has repeatedly urged Israel to do more to protect Palestinian civilians, is expected in the region next week.

In its announcement, the army said that five brigades, or several thousand troops, would be taken out of Gaza in the coming weeks. Some will return to bases for further training or rest, while many older reservists will go home. The war has taken a toll on the economy by preventing reservists from going to their jobs, running their businesses or returning to university studies.

The army's chief spokesperson, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, did not say whether the withdrawal of some troops reflected a new phase of the war.

"The objectives of the war require prolonged fighting, and we are preparing accordingly," he told reporters late Sunday.

But the move is in line with the plans that Israeli leaders have outlined for a low-intensity campaign, expected to last for much of the year, that focuses on remaining Hamas strongholds and "pockets of resistance."

Israel has said it's close to operational control over most of northern Gaza, reducing the need for forces there. Yet fierce fighting has continued in other areas of the Palestinian territory, especially the south, where many of Hamas' forces remain intact and where most of Gaza's 2.3 million people have fled.

Israel has vowed to crush Hamas' military and governing capabilities in the ongoing war, which was sparked by the militant group's Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel in which 1,200 people were killed and 240 others were taken hostage.

Israel responded with an air, ground and sea offensive that has killed more than 21,900 people in Gaza, two-thirds of them women and children, according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-ruled territory, which does not differentiate between civilians and combatants in its count. The Israeli military says 173 soldiers have died since it launched its ground operation.

Israel also says, without providing evidence, that more than 8,000 militants have been killed. It blames Hamas for the high civilian death toll, saying the militants embed within residential areas, including schools and hospitals.

Russia launches record number of drones in Ukraine

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Russia launched a record 90 Shahed-type drones across Ukraine during the early hours of the new year, and Russian President Vladimir Putin said his country would "intensify" its attacks on its neighbor.

Speaking during a New Year's Day visit to a military hospital, Putin said Ukraine could expect more such strikes after shelling of the Russian border city of Belgorod that killed more than two dozen people and wounded more than 100 others.

"They want to intimidate us and create uncertainty within our country. We will intensify strikes. Not a single crime against our civilian population will go unpunished," the Russian leader said, describing the barrage of Belgorod as a "terrorist act."

Russia has blamed Ukraine for Saturday's attack, which was one of the deadliest to take place on Russian soil since Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine started more than 22 months ago. Russian officials said the death toll stood at 25 as of Monday, including five children.

Cities across western Russia regularly have come under drone attacks since May, although Ukrainian officials never acknowledge responsibility for strikes on Russian territory or the Crimean Peninsula.

Putin accused Western nations of using Ukraine to try and "put Russia in its place." While vowing retribution, he insisted Russia would only target military infrastructure in Ukraine.

"Of course, we can hit public squares in Kyiv and in any other Ukrainian city," he said. "I understand — I'm boiling with rage — but do we need to hit civilians? No. We are hitting military targets, and that's what we will keep doing."

Both Ukraine and Russia have relied extensively on explosive droves during the war. The wave of Russian attacks in Ukraine continued throughout the day Monday.

A 15-year-old boy was killed and seven people wounded after falling debris from one of 87 downed drones hit a residential building in the southern Ukrainian city of Odesa, the head of the region's military administration, Oleh Kiper, said. Debris also sparked a number of small fires, including at the city's port.

Drone strikes and artillery fire also killed three people in Ukraine's Kherson, Kharkiv and Sumy regions, including a 73-year-old woman.

In the western city of Lviv, Russian attacks severely damaged a museum dedicated to Roman Shukhevych, a controversial Ukrainian nationalist and military commander who fought for Ukrainian independence during World War II. University buildings in the town of Dubliany were also damaged, although no casualties were reported.

Good Housekeeping

How to boost the health and beauty of your houseplants

By MELINDA MYERS
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

Fight the post-holiday blues with a bit of indoor gardening. Keeping your houseplants healthy and looking their best with a bit of grooming this winter is sure to lift your spirits.

Clip off any dead leaves as they appear. Use sharp snips or bypass pruner to make a clean cut that looks tidy and closes up quickly. An occasional brown leaf is not usually a problem but if browning continues, it might be time to take action.

Brown leaves are often caused by low humidity, which is common in many homes during winter. Boost the humidity in your home by grouping plants together. As one plant loses moisture through its leaves via transpiration, the neighboring plants benefit.

Add pebbles or marbles to the saucer or trays beneath the plants. Allow excess water to collect in the pebbles below the pot. As the water evaporates, it increases the humidity right around the plant.

Move plants that require moist soil and high humidity into a terrarium. They are attractive living decorations and make caring for high-maintenance plants easier.

Over- and under-watering can also result in brown leaves, leaf edges and tips. Water thoroughly when needed, basing the frequency on the plants you are growing, room temperature and humidity. Tropical plants need more consistently moist soil, while cacti and succulents like it drier.

DREAMSTIME/TNS

With lower light conditions in many homes, plants grow slower and may need less frequent watering in winter.

With lower light conditions in many homes, plants grow slower and may need less frequent watering in winter. Pour off any excess water that collects in the saucer which can lead to root rot.

Stop fertilizing indoor plants in winter unless they are actively growing. Applying fertilizer that plants don't need can cause root damage, leading to leaf discoloration.

Trim off brown tips that are common on spider plants, dracaenas, Ti plants and prayer plants sensitive to the chlorine and fluoride in water. Avoid the problem by using chemical-free water.

Wipe dust off the leaves with a damp cloth. Use a cosmetic brush to clean the fuzzy leaves of plants like African violets. Keeping your plants clean and well-groomed also helps reduce insect and disease problems.

Further protect plants from pests with Summit Sticky Traps (SummitResponsibleSolutions.com). Just place one or two in the pot with the sticky side exposed. The yellow attracts fungus gnats, aphids, thrips, leaf miners and other harmful pests feeding on your plants. The sticky surface traps the insects, causing them to die without the use of pesticides. Replace the trap once it is covered with insects or every three months.

Boost indoor plant resilience by providing the right amount of light. Move plants to a sunnier window or add artificial lights as needed. Then give plants a quarter-turn every time you water. This promotes more balanced growth by exposing all parts of the plant to the light source.

Taking time to tend to your plants improves their health and beauty while elevating your mood and helping to fight stress.

Seasonal design

By CATHY HOBBS
Tribune News Service

In designing a space, one place to start is to be inspired by a season. A seasonal inspiration can allow for a springboard to a design especially as it relates to color. Seasonal design can also allow an opportunity to transition or rotate your décor throughout the seasons.

In the winter, we often think of colors such as white and taupe that seem to mimic the wintry weather, while in spring we typically see a shift to more fanciful and playful colors that are bright and friendly such as yellows and pinks. In summer, in some geographic areas there is a focus on natural elements such as beaches and oceans, with a gravitation toward blues and soft greens. In fall we a see a shift to warm colors such as red, orange and deep yellow.

HANDOUT

Warm colors from toss pillows to accessories help to add a sense of coziness to this living space.

HANDOUT

Warm fall colors adds coziness and warmth to a guest bedroom.

HANDOUT

Various shades of blue and green help to extend a cool, summer vibe in a lakeside home.

Where to begin

Before you purchase furniture or décor, a great place to start is with an inspiration. An inspiration can be a previously designed space, a specific piece of furniture or art or even a travel destination that inspired you. Upon selecting an inspiration, allow your intuition to be your guide. Evaluate those elements that inspired you, whether its color, design or architecture.

Getting Started

After you kick-start your design with inspiration, build upon your design by incorporating a selection of similar elements. In general, colors that are tints, tones and shades of the same color will blend well together as will colors that are complimentary on a color wheel.

Fall

Fall is a season that is typically associated with warm colors. These colors are typically "fire" colors such as red, orange, yellow and even brown. In décor, these warm colors can help to add a sense of coziness to a space. These colors work especially well in large, cavernous rooms and spaces in which the goal is to make a space feel less cavernous and homier and more comfortable.

Winter

Winter is a time when, in many instances, the climate is dominated by cold, snowy nights and shortened darker days. Colors such as white, taupe and light gray can help a space feel brighter. This is also a great time to add and incorporate extra light into a space as well.

Spring

This is the time of year when bright, playful colors dominate. Vibrant colors in a space can help to uplift a space and even help to make a space feel "happier" and more inviting. Spring colors can be fanciful like hot pink and cotton candy blue or more subdued such as pastel colors such as pink, yellow and mint green.

Summer

Summer is typically a time when thoughts of sun, sand and beach come to mind. Nautical elements and textured materials also blend with water inspired colors such as blue and green.

Life & Style

Cher asks court to give her conservatorship over her adult son

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Cher has filed a petition to become a temporary conservator overseeing her son's money, saying the 47-year-old's struggles with mental health issues and addiction have left him unable to manage his assets and potentially put his life in danger.

Cher

The Oscar and Grammy winning singer and actor on Wednesday filed the petition in Los Angeles Superior Court that would give her temporary control of the finances of Elijah Blue Allman, her son with musician Gregg Allman.

Cher's petition says that Elijah Allman is entitled to regular payments from a trust fund. But "given his ongoing mental health and substance abuse issues," she is "concerned that any funds distributed to Elijah will be immediately spent on drugs, leaving Elijah with no assets to provide for himself and putting Elijah's life at risk," the petition says.

Reached through his attorney, Elijah Allman said in a phone call with The Associated Press, "I am well, and able, and of sound mind and body."

He declined to say whether he planned to oppose the petition, or give any further comment.

A court-ordered conservatorship is "urgently needed," Cher's filing says. A judge scheduled a January hearing on the issue.

The filing explicitly seeks to keep control of Elijah Allman's finances from his wife, Marieangela King, from whom he filed for divorce in 2021.

The two remain legally married. A filing from King in October says the couple had agreed to pause the divorce proceedings and work on their marriage, but she had not seen him in person in six months.

Cher's petition says the couple's "tumultuous relationship has been marked by a cycle of drug addiction and mental health crises" and that she believes King "is not supportive of Elijah's recovery."

Emails seeking comment from an attorney for King and representatives for Cher were not immediately returned.

Cher has two sons, one from each of her marriages—54-year-old Chaz Bono with the late Sonny Bono, and Elijah Allman, who is the former singer and guitarist of the band Deadsy and is known professionally as P. Exeter Blue.

Conservatorships, known in some states as guardianships, allow courts to give relatives or others control over a person's money and, at times, their life decisions after they are deemed not competent to make such decisions for themselves.

The issue became widely known when what began as a temporary conservatorship over Britney Spears became a years-long legal saga and fight with her father.

Shirley Bassey, Ridley Scott among hundreds on UK's New Year Honors list

LONDON (AP)—Singer Shirley Bassey, director Ridley Scott and Mary Earps, the goalkeeper for England's women's soccer team, were recognized Friday in the U.K.'s New Year Honors list, which celebrates the achievements and services of more than 1,000 people across the country.

Bassey, 86, who is already a dame—the female equivalent of a knight—was appointed to the Order of the Companions of Honor for her services to music. The Welsh singer, best known for her "James Bond" theme songs "Goldfinger" and "Diamonds Are Forever," became the 64th living member of the order, a special status held by no more than 65 people at any one time.

"Entertaining audiences for over 70 years has been a privilege," she said. "My heart is full of emotion and I am truly humbled."

Scott, whose films include "Gladiator," "Alien" and more recently "Napoleon," was awarded for his services to the U.K. film industry. He was made a Knight Grand Cross, upgrading his previous knighthood.

Other well-known names in entertainment on the list included "The Great British Bake Off" judge Paul Hollywood, who was honored for services to baking and broadcasting; and "Game of Thrones" actor Emilia Clarke, who along with her mother were made Members of the Order of the British Empire, or MBE, for their work founding a brain injury recovery charity.

Clarke survived two brain hemorrhages and started the SameYou charity to raise awareness about brain injuries and help advocate for better treatments and rehabilitation for survivors.

In sport, Earps was honored along with Lioness players Millie Bright and Lauren Hemp for their part in helping the Lionesses reach the women's World Cup final in the summer. England lost 1-0 to Spain in the final in Sydney.

Amazon Prime ads on movies and TV shows will begin in late January

If you are an Amazon Prime Video user, get ready to see ads on movies and TV shows starting next month.

Prime will include ads beginning on Jan. 29, the company said in an email to U.S. members this week, setting a date for an announcement it made back in September. Prime members who want to keep their movies and TV shows ad-free will have to pay an additional $2.99 per month.

Amazon is also planning to include advertisements in its Prime service in the United Kingdom and other European countries, as well as Canada, Mexico and Australia next year.

The tech giant follows other major streamers –- such as Netflix and Disney –- who have embraced a dual model that allows them to earn revenue from ads and also offer subscribers the option to opt out with a higher fee.

Amazon said in its email that it will "aim to have meaningfully fewer ads" than traditional TV and other streaming providers.

The ads, the company said, "will allow us to continue investing in compelling content and keep increasing that investment over a long period of time." ***(AP)***

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Denmark's Queen Margrethe II announces she will abdicate the throne on Jan. 14th

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP)—Denmark's Queen Margrethe II announces she will abdicate the throne on Jan. 14.

British actor Tom Wilkinson, known for 'The Full Monty' and 'Michael Clayton,' dies at 75

LONDON (AP)—Tom Wilkinson, the Oscar-nominated British actor known for his roles in "The Full Monty," "Michael Clayton" and "The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel," has died, his family said. He was 75. A statement shared by his agent on behalf of the family said Wilkinson died suddenly at home on Saturday. It didn't provide further details. Wilkinson was nominated for a best actor Academy Award for his work in 2001's family drama "In The Bedroom" and in the best supporting actor category for his role in "Michael Clayton," a 2007 legal thriller that starred George Clooney. He is remembered by many in Britain and beyond for playing former steel mill foreman Gerald Cooper in the 1997 comedy "The Full Monty," about a group of unemployed steel workers who formed an unlikely male stripping act.

135th Rose Parade boasts floral floats, sunny skies as California tradition kicks off the new year

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—Floral floats, marching bands and equestrian units took to the streets under a sunny California sky as the 135th Rose Parade drew hundreds of thousands of spectators on New Year's Day. The Pasadena tradition on Monday featured Broadway legend Audra McDonald as grand marshal and the theme "Celebrating a World of Music: The Universal Language." After recent rains and gray skies, there was plenty of sun for the 8 a.m. start of the spectacle with a military flyover of a B-2 stealth bomber. Among the fanciful floats was Kaiser Permanente's colorful "Symphony of You," which featured 8,000 roses and received the President Award for most outstanding use and presentation of flowers.

Husband's change of heart wasn't so sudden after all

DEAR ABBY: Three months ago, my husband of 30 years came home from work, told me he wasn't happy anymore and said he wanted a divorce. He announced he was moving in with his brother until he could find a place. Six days later, I found out he'd moved in with a woman he'd been seeing for a few months.

I am devastated. He flaunts his new heifer all around town, forcing her on our granddaughters and rubbing her in my face. My divorce has been filed on the grounds of adultery. I can't believe he dragged my adult children into the middle of this and made them lie to me.

I have been trying to let go, but how do you let go of someone who gave you so much to remember? I'm still very much in love with him. After such a long marriage, must I just let it end like this?

DUMBFOUNDED IN TENNESSEE

DEAR DUMBFOUNDED: I suppose you could talk to your lawyer and try to drag out the divorce, hoping your husband will "come to his senses." But at some point, you will have to admit to yourself that the man you married isn't the person you thought he was.

You have every right to feel pain and anger, but your time and money would be better spent in the office of a licensed mental health professional. That your adult children went along with keeping you in the dark is shameful. It will take time to work through this, and the sooner you start, the better.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I moved to a rural area a couple of years ago and was surprised at how friendly my neighbors were. They seemed eager to help at first. I got sick and had to spend a few days in the hospital. I asked the couple to please feed and water my pets until I could come home. They did, but they also made a copy of my house keys, entered my home after I returned to work and stole several thousand dollars' worth of stuff from me.

I am hurt and very angry over this. The police said I have to show receipts to prove ownership of the things that were taken. But most of it I have owned for years, and I no longer have the receipts.

I'm going to confront this couple, but how do I get over what they did? I can't believe how trashy and low-class they are. They both have jobs. I live alone on one salary. A lot of the things they stole I had to save up to pay for. They are nothing more than liars and thieves. What do you suggest?

VICTIMIZED IN OKLAHOMA

DEAR VICTIMIZED: Please accept my sympathy. You trusted your neighbors, and they took advantage. But the horse is out of the barn. Change the locks on your house if you haven't already done it. Install security cameras linked to your cellphone so you have a record of who enters your property when you are out. Photograph and list the serial numbers on your valuable items and store it away from home. (A safety deposit box would be a safe place.) And insure any items of value so you are protected in case it happens again.

■■■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

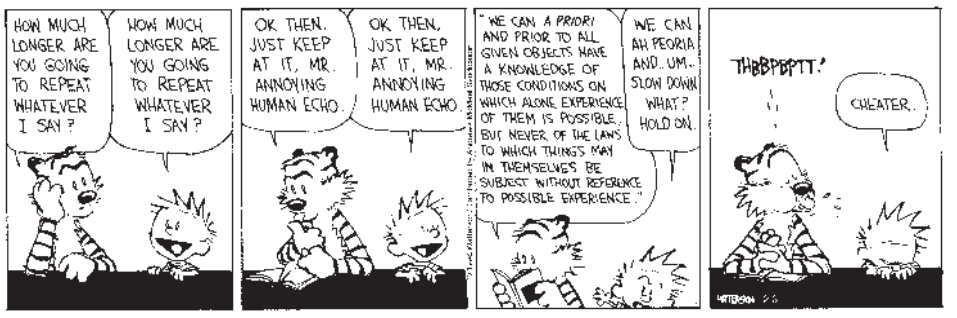
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

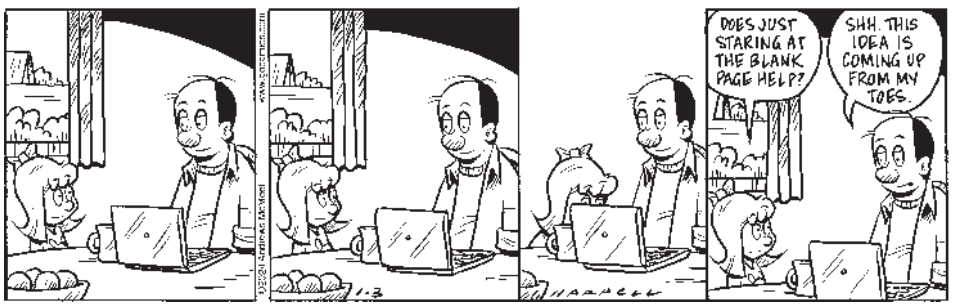

HOW MUCH LONGER ARE YOU GOING TO REPEAT WHATEVER I SAY?
HOW MUCH LONGER ARE YOU GOING TO REPEAT WHATEVER I SAY?
OK, THEN. JUST KEEP AT IT, MR. ANNOYING HUMAN ECHO.
OK, THEN, JUST KEEP AT IT, MR. ANNOYING HUMAN ECHO.
"WE CAN, A PRIORI AND PRIOR TO ALL GIVEN OBJECTS HAVE A KNOWLEDGE OF THOSE CONDITIONS ON WHICH ALONE EXPERIENCE OF THEM IS POSSIBLE. BUT NEVER OF THE LAWS TO WHICH THINGS MAY IN THEMSELVES BE SUBJECT WITHOUT REFERENCE TO POSSIBLE EXPERIENCE."
WE CAN, AH PEORIA AND, UM... SLOW DOWN. WHAT? HOLD ON.
THBBPBPTT!
CHEATER.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

YOU NEED TO WORK OUT HARDER. YOU'RE WAY TOO WEAK.
DID YOU KNOW AN ANT CAN LIFT 50 TIMES ITS BODY WEIGHT?
I'M NOT IMPRESSED.
TRAINER
YOU'RE NOT?
HECK NO. I CAN LIFT 50 TIMES AN ANT'S BODY WEIGHT.
TRAINER

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Texter's "Enough!"
4 Sitarist's music
8 Bowlers and boaters
12 "A snake!"
13 Always
14 "Night" author Wiesel
15 Scot's refusal
16 "Swan Lake" performer
18 Big mix-up
20 Sphere
21 Quick swims
24 Leaves for lunch?
28 California island
32 Peru's capital
33 Raw mineral
34 Abounds
36 Started
37 Cash advance
39 Pasta wheat
41 Extemporize
43 Rock climber's need
44 Capote nickname
46 Competitor
50 "Crazy Rich Asians" actress
55 Post-op area
56 Ovid's 53
57 Norse god
58 Stanley Cup org.
59 Body sci.
60 Aviator's milestone
61 Slithery fish

DOWN
1 Till bills
2 Intend
3 Sofa brand
4 Like some auto engines
5 "Selma" director DuVernay
6 Solidify
7 Singer Guthrie
8 Tea type
9 "The Greatest"
10 Can material
11 Briny expanse
17 Triage ctrs.
19 Rx overseer
22 Picnic desserts
23 Villain's look
25 Leslie Caron film
26 Prayer ender
27 Baby's father
28 Pop choice
29 Yankee nickname
30 Blue shade
31 Weaponry, for short
35 Choir member
38 Boob
40 Maui souvenir
42 Bikini half
45 Sci-fi vehicles
47 Tarzan's transport
48 Sore spot
49 Temporary calm
50 In the manner of
51 Victory
52 Sportage maker
53 Promising words?
54 Zero

Solution time: 23 mins.

E	H	I	C		A	S	I	A		H	A	M
T	E	A	R		F	A	R	M		A	C	E
H	O	M	E	M	O	V	I	E		P	A	N
			D	O	P	E		R	A	P	I	D
A	C	H	C	O			W	I	L	Y		
P	H	I	S		P	L	A	C	E	M	A	T
T	I	G		M	O	I	R	A		E	L	I
S	C	H	M	O	O	Z	E		S	A	I	D
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B	L	A	N	C		S	I	D	E			
F	A	R		H	A	N	D	M	I	X	F	R
A	R	K		E	D	I	E		G	O	R	E
D	A	S		S	O	P	S		H	O	A	X

Yesterday's answer 1-3

1	2	3	■	4	5	6	7	■	8	9	10	11
12			■	13				■	14			
15			■	16				17				
18			19		■	■	20			■	■	■
■	■	■	21		22	23	■	24		25	26	27
28	29	30					31	■	32			
33			■	34				35	■	36		
37			38	■	39				40			
41				42	■	43				■	■	■
■	■	■	44		45	■	■	46		47	48	49
50	51	52				53	54		■	55		
56				■	57					58		
59				■	60				■	61		

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Eli Manning, 43; Danica McKellar, 49; Mel Gibson, 68; Victoria Principal, 74.

Happy Birthday: Concentrate on personal changes that make your life easier. Peace of mind will be the byproduct of making your life and surroundings less cumbersome. The amount of free time you gain by decluttering your life will encourage you to fulfill your dreams and walk away from people and situations that bring you down. Figure out what makes you happy and do that. Romance and personal improvements are favored. Your numbers are 3, 10, 19, 28, 36, 41, 44.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19)*: Live and learn. Get involved in the conversation and prepare to make moves that help you outperform anyone who may challenge you mentally, physically or emotionally. Put forth your best effort, and you will reap the rewards. Romance and personal gain are favored. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20)*: Update your credentials, look at trends and apply for a position that helps you fulfill your dreams. It's up to you to create opportunities and bring about changes that satisfy your soul. Don't let an emotional attachment stand in your way. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20)*: Look at the cost before you get involved in something that may lead to restrictions. Don't let anyone interfere with your decisions or lead you astray. Focus on what you want to do in order to achieve your goal. A new look or romance looks promising. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22)*: Observe the changes others make and consider a move or change of direction. Researching will help you decide what's best for you. Refuse to let your emotions get in the way of your progress. It's time to please yourself. ✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22)*: Sign up for something novel. Don't feel the need to follow the crowd or allow someone to navigate what you do next. A pastime that leads to a cost-efficient lifestyle will help you get your house in order. Avoid joint ventures or shared expenses. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22)*: Look outside your immediate proximity for answers. Problems at home will escalate if you are reluctant to say something. Don't let someone you love dictate things when a couple of changes will buy you the time and opportunity to learn something new or pursue your happiness. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22)*: Adjust your routine to eliminate the time you waste due to a lack of organization or letting people take advantage of you. Start to designate some of the little jobs you don't care to do to those eager to get involved in your project. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21)*: Pay attention to money matters. Spontaneous purchases or donations may offer instant gratification, but it won't last when you tally up what you spent and how much you owe. Look for opportunities to cut corners. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21)*: A quick fix will boost your morale. A trendy new look that's simple, affordable and gives you additional confidence and energy will help you spring into action. Altering how you live or handle day-to-day situations will point you in the right direction. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19)*: Don't ignore an opportunity. A domestic change can help save money or make it possible to start a project that can bring in extra cash. Don't let anyone stand in your way or make you feel inadequate or uncertain about something you want to pursue. ✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18)*: Don't let emotional spending spin out of control. Excess is the enemy, and knowing when to say no is necessary. Stick to your routine; a change will run amok. Use intelligence and skills to work alongside reputable people to prosper. Self-improvement and love are favored. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20)*: Keep an open mind, but don't allow anyone to coax you into something questionable. You'll do your best if you concentrate on earning a decent living and handling your financial affairs. Partnering with someone may seem more manageable, but it will slow you down due to differences. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are curious, hesitant and considerate. You are moveable and perceptive.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

7			9	3				
		3	7				4	
9					4	5		
3			8	9	1			
4					2			1
8		2		4				
		7		1		4		2
	3						6	
5		8			6		9	

Difficulty: ★★★ 1/3

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

8	9	2	7	1	6	5	4	3
5	7	1	2	4	3	9	6	8
4	3	6	9	8	5	1	2	7
7	5	3	1	6	9	2	8	4
2	1	4	5	3	8	6	7	9
6	8	9	4	2	7	3	1	5
1	2	8	3	5	4	7	9	6
9	4	5	6	7	1	8	3	2
3	6	7	8	9	2	4	5	1

Difficulty: ★★ 1/2

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

'OUT ON THE HUSTINGS' **Solution: 7 letters**

S	L	L	A	C	E	N	O	H	P	O	D	I	U	M
W	E	I	V	R	E	T	N	I	H	P	L	A	N	B
E	S	R	E	E	T	N	U	L	O	V	T	E	A	W
I	N	T	E	R	N	E	T	G	T	R	Z	U	T	E
V	T	E	A	O	M	A	E	T	O	I	L	E	T	B
O	N	C	T	F	T	O	R	P	T	A	L	T	E	S
T	E	U	N	F	F	U	P	I	I	N	L	A	N	I
E	M	D	O	I	O	U	C	C	N	S	A	R	T	T
L	N	O	I	C	S	A	R	G	O	A	H	E	I	E
E	R	R	T	E	M	E	R	O	N	N	G	P	O	G
C	E	T	C	P	M	O	N	E	Y	I	L	O	N	A
T	V	N	A	M	U	E	R	A	W	A	T	I	L	S
I	O	I	O	P	L	A	T	F	O	R	M	E	N	S
O	G	C	I	L	B	U	P	R	O	M	O	T	E	E
N	O	I	S	I	V	E	L	E	T	E	K	R	A	M

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Action, Attention, Aware, Campaign, Citizen, Commercial, Court, Election, Goal, Government, Group, Hall, Internet, Interview, Introduce, Market, Mayor, Meeting, Message, Money, Office, Online, Operate, Phone Calls, Photo, Plan, Platform, Podium, Promote, Public, Slogan, Staff, Support, Team, Television, Views, Volunteer, Vote, Website

Yesterday's Answer: Diffuser

The NEW Wonderword Grand Millennium #1 in LARGE PRINT is now available at: www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

2 days after ending 28-game losing streak, Pistons lose to Rockets

HOUSTON (AP)—Two nights after their NBA record-tying 28-game losing streak ended, the Detroit Pistons were blown out 136-113 on Monday night by the Houston Rockets, who got 26 points and nine assists from Alperen Sengun and 22 points from Jalen Green.

Detroit (3-30), which beat Toronto 129-127 on Saturday, failed to win consecutive games for the second time this season. Green and Sengun combined to score 37 points in the third quarter as the Rockets outscored the Pistons 47-25 in the period to take a 106-80 lead into the fourth.

Sengun shot 9 of 13 from the field and Green made five 3-pointers as the Rockets snapped a three-game skid.

Alec Burks scored 21 points, Jaden Ivey added 19 and Bojan Bogdanovic had 14 for the Pistons. Jalen Duren had 12 points and 13 rebounds.

Tari Eason had 17 points, Jae'Sean Tate scored 16 and Fred VanVleet had 15 points and seven assists for Houston.

AP

Detroit Pistons guard Cade Cunningham, right, drives to the basket as Houston Rockets forward Tari Eason, left, defends during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Monday, Jan. 1, 2024, in Houston.

PACERS 122, BUCKS 113

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Tyrese Haliburton had 26 points, 11 assists and nine rebounds, and Indiana snapped Milwaukee's 15-game home winning streak.

Bennedict Mathurin added 25 points and a career-high 13 rebounds for the Pacers, and Isaiah Jackson had 18 points and nine assists. T.J. McConnell scored 12 of his 16 points in the fourth quarter and also had nine assists.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 30 points, 18 rebounds and 11 assists for his 38th career triple-double, and third this season. The two-time MVP is averaging 46.3 points, 13.5 rebounds and 4.8 assists in four meetings with Indiana this season, but the Bucks are 1-3 in those games.

Brook Lopez and Khris Middleton each scored 21 points for the Bucks. Damian Lillard had 13 points while shooting 3 of 16 overall and 1 of 9 from 3-point range.

RAPTORS 124, CAVALIERS 121

TORONTO (AP)—Pascal Siakam scored 36 points, Jakob Poeltl had 14 points and 11 rebounds and new-look Toronto recovered after squandering a 19-point lead to beat Cleveland.

RJ Barrett had 19 points and nine rebounds and Immanuel Quickley added 14 in the players' first start for the Raptors. Barrett and Quickley were acquired from the Knicks on Saturday in a trade that sent OG Anunoby to New York.

Scottie Barnes scored 20 points and Dennis Schroder added 12 points off the bench as Toronto bounced back after falling at Detroit on Saturday, when the Pistons snapped an NBA record-tying 28-game losing streak.

Caris LeVert scored 31 points and Donovan Mitchell had 26 for the Cavaliers, who have lost two straight and three of five. Isaac Okoro, Jarrett Allen and Sam Merrill each had 16 points for Cleveland.

NUGGETS 111, HORNETS 93

DENVER (AP)—Jamal Murray scored 25 points and Michael Porter Jr. added 22 as Denver handed short-handed Charlotte it's 11th straight loss.

Nikola Jokic had 13 points, 11 rebounds and six assists for the Nuggets. Two of the Hornets' losses during the streak have come against the Nuggets in the last 1 1/2 weeks.

Aaron Gordon, who suffered cuts to his hand and face when he was bitten by a dog on Christmas Day, had 10 points in his return for Denver. Gordon played with a small protective bandage on his right hand and his facial cuts were barely visible.

Miles Bridges led Charlotte with 26 points, and Nick Richards and Brandon Miller each scored 15.

SUNS 109, TRAIL BLAZERS 88

PHOENIX (AP)—Bradley Beal scored 21 points and Phoenix beat Portland for its fourth straight win.

With Kevin Durant sidelined by right hamstring tightness, the Suns had seven players score in double figures. Jusuf Nurkic, playing against his former team, had 18 points. Chimezie Metu, starting for Durant, scored 14, and Grayson Allen and reserve Eric Gordon each had 12.

Phoenix star Devin Booker was held to 10 points on 4-of-16 shooting, but contributed eight rebounds and six assists. Bol Bol helped make up for Durant's absence with 11 points and nine rebounds.

Scoot Henderson led the Trail Blazers with 17 points. Jerami Grant scored 15 points, and Malcolm Brogdon and Jabari Walker each had 10.

KNICKS 112, TIMBERWOLVES 106

NEW YORK (AP)—Julius Randle scored 39 points, OG Anunoby had 17 in a strong debut with his new team and New York beat Minnesota.

Jalen Brunson added 16 points and a career-high 14 assists for the Knicks, who snapped a three-game losing streak after putting Anunoby into the starting lineup for his first game since coming from Toronto in Saturday's trade that sent RJ Barrett and Immanuel Quickley to the Raptors.

The Timberwolves cut a 22-point deficit down to four midway through the fourth quarter, but Randle rescued the Knicks by scoring their next 11 points, including a three-point play that made it 110-102 with 23 seconds remaining.

Anthony Edwards scored 35 points, his third straight game above 30, to lead Minnesota. Karl-Anthony Towns snapped out of a recent scoring slump with 29.

JAZZ 127, MAVERICKS 90

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Jordan Clarkson came off the bench to get 20 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds for Utah's first regular-season triple-double since 2008, leading the Jazz past Dallas.

Clarkson got the first triple-double of his career, and the first for the Jazz in a regular-season game since Carlos Boozer had one on Feb. 13, 2008, a stretch of 1,256 games. Also, Clarkson's triple-double was the first in more than 40 years for a Jazz player coming off the bench, dating to Feb. 5, 1983, when Mark Eaton had 12 points, 14 rebounds and 12 blocked shots.

Simone Fontecchio led the Jazz with 24 points. Lauri Markkanen added 17 points and John Collins chipped in 15.

Luke Doncic led the Mavericks with 19 points, 14 assists and six rebounds. Jaden Hardy hit five 3-pointers and scored 17 points for Dallas.

CLIPPERS 121, HEAT 104

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Kawhi Leonard scored 24 points in his return from injury, Paul George added 23 and the Los Angeles Clippers beat the short-handed Miami Heat 121-104 on Monday night for their third straight win.

The Clippers opened the new year where they left off after going 11-2 in December for the West's best record during the month. Norman Powell added 22 points off the bench and James Harden had 15 points and 10 assists.

Leonard was back after missing four games with a hip contusion. The Clippers held things down in his absence, going 2-2.

Leonard's dunk to open the fourth gave him 13,000 career points. He had six rebounds and five assists before sitting down for the game's final 5:43.

Leonard got off to a slow start, missing both of his shot attempts in the first when he was scoreless.

But Leonard found his spots in the second, scoring 13 points including 10 in a row, as the Clippers erased a 14-point deficit to lead 59-58 at halftime.

Bam Adebayo led the Heat with 21 points and 15 rebounds. Kevin Love added 17 points off the bench. Kyle Lowry returned after being out with a head contusion and had eight points.

NBA BRIEFS

Nuggets forward Aaron Gordon back at practice after dog bite

DENVER (AP)—Power forward Aaron Gordon rejoined the Denver Nuggets for practice Sunday, a week after he was bitten by his pet Rottweiler, leaving him with 21 stitches across his right shooting hand and face. Gordon told The Denver Post he feels he's ready to return to action Monday night when the Nuggets host the Charlotte Hornets. Coach Michael Malone said Gordon looked good at practice Sunday, "but we'll see how he's feeling tomorrow with the hand." Gordon said his 4-year-old dog, which he adopted at six weeks, had been in the care of family members because of the travel demands of the NBA schedule and that he was playing with his dog following the Nuggets' win over the Warriors on Christmas Day when he was bitten. Gordon said he'd "probably had a little too much eggnog" and was "kind of roughhousing with my dog, and I think my dog got a little excited and just basically chomped down." Most of Gordon's 21 stitches are on his right hand, but he's also scarred near his lip. "I've played with stitches in my hand before, so that's not new to me," he said, adding, "I don't really care about the stitches on my face. We're not running a pageant here." Gordon said he blames himself for the dog bite. "He's a good boy. He's a good dog," Gordon said. "… Very attached. Very sweet. Very strong. Great dog." Gordon is averaging 13.6 points, 6.9 rebounds and 3.4 assists.

Former NBA G League player held in woman's killing due in Vegas court after transfer from Sacramento

LAS VEGAS (AP)—A former NBA developmental league player accused with his ex-girlfriend of killing a woman whose body was found last month in southern Nevada is due to face a Las Vegas judge on Tuesday following his transfer in custody from a jail in Sacramento, California. Chance Comanche, 27, who played for the Stockton Kings before his Dec. 15 arrest in Sacramento, arrived Sunday at the Clark County Detention Center and is due for an initial appearance, jail and court records showed. Comanche's defense attorney, Gary Guymon, declined comment Monday ahead of the court appearance. Comanche's' former girlfriend, Sakari Harnden, 19, also is jailed in Las Vegas pending a separate preliminary hearing Wednesday on charges related to the disappearance and death of Marayna Rodgers, 23, of Lynnwood, Washington. Police in Las Vegas said Rodgers, a medical assistant, was choked to death early Dec. 6. Her remains were later found in a roadside ditch in suburban Henderson. Comanche, a 6-foot-10 power forward and center, was dropped following his arrest by Stockton, the NBA G League affiliate of the Sacramento Kings. The team had played the G League Henderson Ignite on Dec. 5.

Analysis: Cowboys got all breaks while Ravens, 49ers were big winners

By ROB MAADDI
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

The Dallas Cowboys got another big victory without taking the field Sunday. The Baltimore Ravens and San Francisco 49ers took care of business to make sure they get an extra week of rest.

The NFL's playoff picture is clearer with one week to go.

Nine teams are in. Five spots remain open. Twenty clubs are still chasing the Super Bowl.

Baltimore secured the AFC's No. 1 seed with a 56-19 victory over Miami. Lamar Jackson threw five touchdown passes and had a perfect passer rating, helping the Ravens (13-3) secure a first-round bye and home-field advantage throughout the playoffs while also boosting his chances to win his second NFL MVP award.

The 49ers wrapped up the NFC's No. 1 seed with a 27-10 victory at Washington and help from Arizona. When the Cardinals rallied to beat Philadelphia 35-31, that gave San Francisco (12-4) the top spot.

The Ravens and 49ers can rest their starters next week and they don't have to play until the divisional round on Jan. 20-21.

Arizona's stunning comeback win over the Eagles (11-5) also gave the Cowboys (11-5) control of the NFC East. Dallas would secure the division and lock up the No. 2 seed with a win at Washington in Week 18.

The Cowboys got all the breaks over the weekend. After poor clock management by coach Mike McCarthy nearly blew the game Saturday night, the officials gave Dallas a reprieve and the Cowboys held on to beat Detroit 20-19. The Lions were successful on a 2-point conversion to take the lead in the final minute only to have it negated by a penalty because offensive lineman Taylor Decker was an ineligible receiver when he caught the pass.

AP

Baltimore Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson (8) and wide receiver Zay Flowers (4) celebrate their touchdown against the Miami Dolphins during the first half of an NFL football game in Baltimore, Sunday, Dec. 31, 2023.

Referee Brad Allen said Decker never reported as eligible. Allen and his officiating crew missed a call on the previous drive by Dallas that may have prevented the wacky ending.

A tripping penalty on Cowboys tight end Peyton Hendershot turned a second-and-3 into a first-and-25 at the Detroit 44. The tripping penalty should've been called against Lions defensive end Aidan Hutchinson instead of Hendershot. There was no comment from the league about the call on Sunday.

Now the Cowboys are in position to start the playoffs at home, where they went 8-0. All they have to do is beat the Commanders (4-12) on the road.

The Dolphins (11-5) went from playing for the AFC's No. 1 seed to having to beat Buffalo next week to clinch the division title. If the Bills (10-6) beat Miami on the road, they'd secure the AFC East and the Dolphins would drop to the No. 6 spot. Buffalo would finish sixth, seventh or out of the playoffs with a loss.

The defending Super Bowl champion Chiefs (10-6) took the AFC West for the eighth straight season by beating Cincinnati 25-17. The Chiefs will enter the playoffs as the No. 3 seed. They've hosted the AFC championship game five straight years, but the path to doing it again requires a couple of teams to get upset.

The Jaguars, Colts and Texans each won to stay in the race for the AFC South at 9-7 apiece. Jacksonville holds the tiebreakers and would clinch the division and the No. 4 seed for the second straight year with a win at Tennessee (5-11) next week. Indianapolis visits Houston with the winner advancing as division champion or wild-card winner and the loser eliminated.

The Steelers (9-7) kept their playoff hopes alive with a 30-23 win at Seattle. Pittsburgh needs a win over Baltimore plus help to get a wild-card spot.

Joe Flacco and the Cleveland Browns (11-5) already have the AFC's No. 5 seed locked up and will play the AFC South champion in the wild-card round.

Tampa Bay missed an opportunity to clinch its third straight NFC South with a flat performance in a 23-13 loss at home to New Orleans. The Buccaneers (8-8) still can wrap up the division crown with a win at Carolina (2-14) next week.

The Saints (8-8) and Falcons (7-9) face off with a chance to win the division if the Panthers upset Tampa Bay. New Orleans still would have a shot at a wild-card spot if the Buccaneers win.

The Los Angeles Rams (9-7) edged the New York Giants 26-25 to clinch a wild-card berth. Green Bay routed Minnesota 33-10 to surpass Seattle and take control of the final wild-card spot. The Packers (8-8) would get in with a win at home over Chicago. The Vikings (7-9) need a win at Detroit and a lot of help. The Seahawks (8-8) have to win at Arizona and need the Packers to lose.

McCaffrey will miss 49ers regular-season finale but should return for the playoffs

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP)—NFL leading rusher Christian McCaffrey will miss San Francisco's regular-season finale with a mild calf strain but should be ready to return for the playoffs.

McCaffrey got hurt in Sunday's 27-10 victory at Washington that helped the 49ers clinch the No. 1 seed in the NFC and a first-round bye. San Francisco (12-4) will host a divisional round playoff game on either Jan. 20 or 21, giving McCaffrey nearly three weeks to heal.

"We're real confident on that," coach Kyle Shanahan said Monday about McCaffrey being ready for the playoff opener. "It was good news. Could've been a lot worse. We're happy it'll take care of him this week. Hopefully he'll start getting to go during our off week."

McCaffrey leads the NFL with 1,459 yards rushing and 2,023 yards from scrimmage and is tied with Miami's Raheem Mostert for the most touchdowns with 21.

Elijah Mitchell will take over the starting running back role this week against the Rams. Mitchell had 17 carries for 80 yards and a touchdown against the Commanders in his most extensive action of the season.

Shanahan said he hadn't decided yet on whether he will rest any healthy players, including quarterback Brock Purdy, for the finale now that San Francisco has nothing at stake against the Los Angeles Rams on Sunday.

"It is really a hard thing to do and it's not always the best thing to do too," Shanahan said about giving players a week off. "So, we're going to take everything into account, but it's still something we're going to continue talking about throughout this day and tomorrow."

In other injury news, starting cornerback Ambry Thomas will have surgery Tuesday on a broken hand but likely will be back for the playoff opener.

San Francisco will get receiver and return specialist Ray-Ray-McCloud back at practice this week after a stint on injured reserve. McCloud missed the past five games with injured ribs.

Defensive tackle Arik Armstead (foot, knee), tight end Ross Dwelley (ankle) and safety Ji'Ayir Brown (knee) are expected to miss this week to get more time to heal.

Receiver Jauan Jennings and offensive lineman Jaylon Moore remain in concussion protocol.

NFL aware of video showing Panthers owner David Tepper throwing drink at Jaguars fans

By ROB MAADDI
AP PRO FOOTBALL WRITER

Neither the NFL nor the Jaguars had any comment Monday on Carolina Panthers owner David Tepper throwing the contents of a drink into a crowd near the end of his team's 26-0 loss at Jacksonville on Sunday.

The league said it's aware of the video showing Tepper's reaction after rookie quarterback Bryce Young threw an interception with less than 3 minutes to play.

It wasn't clear whether Tepper was reacting to something said to him or another loss for the NFL's worst team. The Panthers are 2-14 and won't even have the No. 1 overall pick in the draft because it was traded to Chicago for the top pick used to select Young.

The Jaguars also declined to comment.

Panthers general manager Scott Fitterer was standing near Tepper when he tossed whatever remained of his drink while watching the game from a club suite.

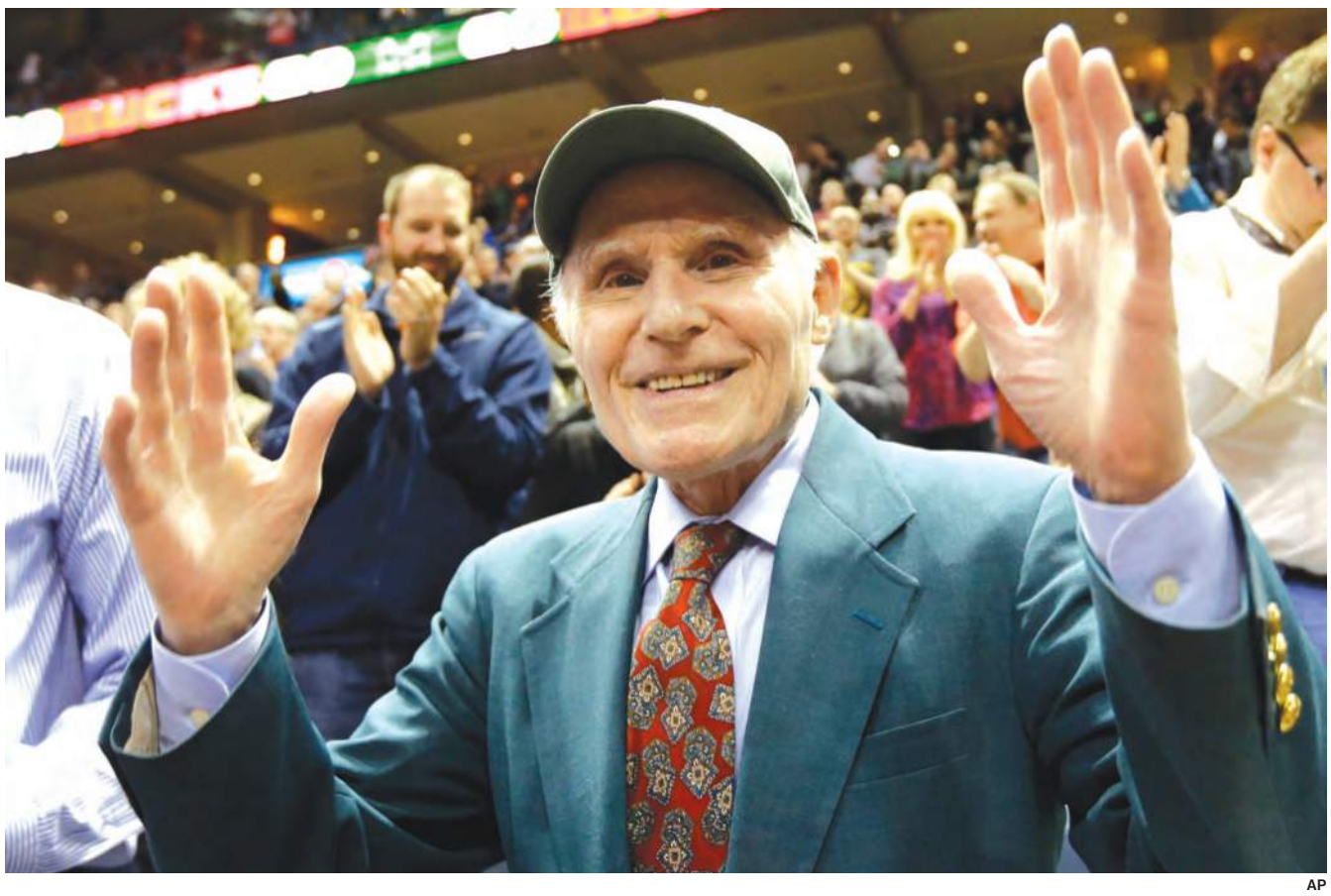
In 2009, the NFL fined the late Titans owner Bud Adams $250,000 for making an obscene gesture at Buffalo fans while celebrating Tennessee's victory over the Bills.

Fans have been banned from stadiums for throwing drinks at players.

It's been a rough year for Tepper, who fired first-year coach Frank Reich after just 11 games. Since Tepper bought the Panthers less than six years ago, he has gone through coaches Ron Rivera, Matt Rhule and Reich, plus interim coaches Perry Fewell, Steve Wilks and Chris Tabor.

Former senator, Bucks owner Herb Kohl has died

By TODD RICHMOND and FREDERIC J. FROMMER
Associated Press



AP

Milwaukee Bucks owner Herb Kohl is acknowledged by fans during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Atlanta Hawks, Wednesday, April 16, 2014, in Milwaukee.

Herb Kohl, a former Democratic U.S. senator from Wisconsin and former owner of the NBA's Milwaukee Bucks, has died. He was 88.

His death Wednesday was announced by Herb Kohl Philanthropies, which did not give a cause but said he died after a brief illness.

"More than anything, Herb loved Milwaukee and Wisconsin, and that is where he chose to live out his days," Kohl's foundation said in a statement. "He touched an incalculable number of lives, and those who love him would remark that he is among the most decent people to ever walk the earth."

Kohl was a popular figure in Wisconsin, purchasing the Bucks to keep them from leaving town, and spending generously from his fortune on civic and educational causes throughout the state. He also used his money to fund his Senate races, allowing to him to portray himself as "nobody's senator but yours."

In the Senate, a body renowned for egos, Kohl was an unusual figure. He was quiet and not one to seek credit, yet effective on issues important to the state, especially dairy policy. He was one of the richest members of the Senate, and the Senate's only professional sports team owner.

Kohl was born in Milwaukee, where he was a childhood friend of Bud Selig, who went on to become commissioner of Major League Baseball. The two roomed together at the University of Wisconsin and remained friends in adulthood.

After receiving his bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1956, Kohl went on to earn a master's degree in business administration from Harvard University in 1958, and he served in the Army Reserve from 1958-64. He helped grow the family-owned business, Kohl's grocery and department stores, and served as company president in the 1970s. The corporation was sold in 1979.

Kohl also got into Wisconsin politics in the 1970s, serving as chair of the state Democratic Party from 1975 to 1977.

In 1985, Kohl bought the Bucks for $18 million.

"I am pleased, happy and delighted," he said at a news conference. "The Milwaukee Bucks are in Milwaukee and they are going to stay in Milwaukee."

The team was in the middle of its sixth straight winning season when Kohl bought it, and it went on to post winning records in the first six full seasons with Kohl as owner, before stumbling through most of the 1990s. The team improved in the late '90s and early 2000s. In 2006, Kohl, owner of the small-market Bucks, was one of eight league owners to ask then-NBA Commissioner David Stern to implement revenue sharing.

"There was never any doubt about his extraordinary commitment to the franchise and city that he loved, and his vision and unparalleled financial contribution towards a new arena in Milwaukee will forever be remembered," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said in a statement. "I send my deepest condolences to Senator Kohl's family, friends and the Bucks organization. He will be deeply missed by his NBA family."

He eventually sold the team in 2014 to New York billionaires Wes Edens and Marc Lasry. He contributed $100 million toward construction of a new arena, Fiserv Forum, to replace the aging Bradley Center, helping ensure the team would remain in Milwaukee. The arena opened in 2018. Three years later, Giannis Antetokounmpo led the Bucks past the Phoenix Suns to claim the NBA championship, the team's first since 1971.

"He's done so many things for the city of Milwaukee, so many things for the Milwaukee Bucks organization," Antetokounmpo said of Kohl after the Bucks beat the Brooklyn Nets on Wednesday night. "He's going to be definitely missed."

Kohl's civic commitments extended well beyond keeping professional basketball in Wisconsin. He donated $25 million to the University of Wisconsin to help fund construction of the Kohl Center, home to the school's basketball and hockey teams. It was the single largest private donation in university history.

"I was very happy to be in a position to help build a first-rate, state-of-the-art sports arena," Kohl once said. "I think it cements the university's reputation as one of the premier athletic programs in the Big Ten and the country."

He also used his own money to fund the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation, which donates money for scholarships and fellowships to students, teachers and schools in Wisconsin.

In 1988, Kohl decided to run for the Senate, following the announcement that Sen. William Proxmire was retiring, and defeated then-state Sen. Susan Engeleiter, the Republican candidate. He won reelection in 1994, 2000 and 2006. His considerable fortune helped scare away the Republican Party from mounting a serious challenge in 2006.

Kohl never accepted a pay raise in the Senate; he drew a salary of $89,500 every year, the same pay he got when he entered the Senate in 1989, returning the rest to the Treasury Department.

In the Senate, Kohl tended to home state interests. He opposed the Northeast Dairy Compact, a program opposed by Midwestern dairy farmers, and helped prevent it from being renewed in Congress. Kohl was instrumental in coming up with a replacement program, the Milk Income Loss Contract, which paid dairy farmers cash when prices fell below a certain level; the program especially helped Wisconsin dairy farmers.

As the top Democrat on the Senate Appropriations agriculture subcommittee, which controls the budget of the Department of Agriculture, Kohl had a strong say on farm policy. He was also the top Democrat on the Senate Aging Committee and the Judiciary antitrust subcommittee. Kohl served as chair of all three panels when Democrats were in the majority.

Kohl didn't mind doing things in the Senate without much credit. As Congress became more and more partisan, the diminutive Kohl almost seemed to be a throwback to another era.

"I am a person who does not believe in invective," he once said. "I never go out and look to grab the mike or go in front of the TV camera. When I go to work everyday, I check my ego at the door."

He was succeeded by Democrat Tammy Baldwin, Wisconsin's first female senator and the Senate's first openly gay member.

Kohl, who never married, said that being single gave him time to balance the demands of life as a senator and owner. A sign on his Senate office desk said: "The Bucks Stop Here."

TENORIO

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and Cris Pangelinan, Dominic Hideo, Tenorio, and Joe Kapileo collected five strikeouts each.

Camacho leads the batters with a .667 batting average from eight hits in 12 at-bats, followed by Pirates' Audie Maratita at .615 with eight hits from 13 at-bats. Blue Jays' Jun Salalila and Pirates' Pete Tomokane also share the same stats with Maratita.

Maratita also leads the league with the most doubles at four and the most RBIs with 13.

Takai, George, Ed Manibusan, Eric Palacios, J-Boy Deleon Guerrero, Salalila, Robert Bansil, Shine Tenorio, and Tony Pangelinan are after Maratita with two doubles each.

Bruce Norita, Jess Mesa, Pete Tomokane, Shine Tenorio, and Richard Quitugua are after Maratita in RBIs with seven each; and Palacios and Camacho have six each.

Derek Aguon and James Benavente lead the league with the most runs scored at 12 each; Takai has 11; Pete Tomokane has 10; Carfield Sablan collected nine; and Camacho and Walter Macaranas are at eight each.

There are still no home runs yet.

The league is set to continue tonight with the Spartans vs. the Reds. Tomorrow is Marlins vs. the Pirates, and on Friday the Blue Jays face off against the Dodgers.

The championship series is slated for Feb. 19, Feb. 21, and Feb. 23.

DOC

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start the day."

His goal is to reach 1,000 days straight of running. He did say he is joining the Saipan Marathon on March 9 so it'll be a challenge for him as he's also currently training for that. He won't hit the comma on the marathon, but he said, "I at least want to hit 1,000… I'll probably keep going though. It's a habit like brushing your teeth…"

His advice for those who want to start a streak or are currently on one, "Take care of yourself. I take safety very seriously… watch where you're running because you don't want to injure yourself. A lot of people I know who were streaking stopped because they injured themselves… just be safe."

JOLLY

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Castro controlled the court and laid it all on the line in the winner-take-all final set as he power-served his team to a 7-0 lead. The 4 Starz' defenses were penetrated over and over with well-placed and powerful aces that put the Jolly Bangerz closer to victory.

4 Starz managed to claw their way from an almost shutout third set and sneaked in a few points. It wasn't enough though to come out of a large deficit and in the end, Jolly Bangerz's overpowered them with an explosion of untouchable spikes at the net which led to the eventual downfall of 4 Starz and the claim of the championship trophy.

The Jolly Bangerz defeated Mistletoe Magic in the semis last Thursday, 25-22, 20-25, 15-7. Before that, they beat Chura in the quarterfinals in two rapid-fire sets, 25-20, 25-23.

The tourney started last Dec. 16 with 12 men's teams and eight women's teams and were put into two pools of the men's and women's bracket.

Justo said of their win, "It's a good experience and a good fight for us to challenge 4 Starz—they're mostly national players—and our team are mostly high school students. So, it was a good challenge."

As for the tournament, he said their team started off slow as they still had to build chemistry and gain confidence as a team. Later, it all fell into place. He said in the finals, "we took the first set pretty confidently, but in the second set, they got to us. In the third set though, we started getting it back and got the lead." He attributed the final set to Castro's powerful 7-0 performance.

He then thanked Agape Christian School for hosting the tourney every year, and event coordinator En Yang Pang.

Results of the women's championship game will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

2 days after ending 28-game losing streak, Pistons lose to Rockets.

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Sports

Former senator, Bucks owner Herb Kohl has died.

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The Doc is in at 2 years of running

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The Force is still with Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero as his running streak is intact and two years or 730 days strong.

The Northern Marianas College president ended 2023 with a bang on New Year's Eve last Sunday as he raced Run Saipan's Run from '23 Mile Race which also handed him his second straight year of running everyday.

Deleon Guerrero has logged over 1,000 miles of running in different countries, time zones, in airports, through sickness, and through all the elements.

He said the days when he almost missed were when he traveled. "You're dealing with not only time zone differences, but you're also traveling for like 24 hours in some cases, so I just run in the airport. A lot of these international airports are big enough to run in. It's not like a heavy run—I don't want to scare airport security. I'll wear my running shoes and it'll be just like a jog… that's the hardest part because at first it was a little embarrassing."

He said the airports that's easy to squeeze a mile in are the Narita International Airport in Japan and the Los Angeles International Airport or LAX.

On Saipan, Deleon Guerrero lives up north and said he would do his daily run in the early mornings to either Banzai Cliff, Suicide Cliff, or the Last Command Post. "It's just a beautiful run but you see a lot more cyclists than runners," he said.

With his second year in the bag, Deleon Guerrero said running everyday has gotten "a lot easier."

He said he ran 600 miles in his first year of running everyday and said he's run a lot more in the second year. "I'm running a lot more, running better, and I'm also healthier… I'm losing some weight, I have more energy, I sleep better, so it's just overall better for my health."

Deleon Guerrero said he was inspired by longtime streak runner and Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr. and Saipan International School headmaster Dr. Ron Snyder. "I started posting and then I inspired other people who are doing it as well. So, it's just great to see other people being inspired to live healthy."

As to how he keeps pushing to run everyday, he said, "I'm always talking to people or working with people when it comes to my job, so my running is my daily way to just reflect, pray, and kind of get ready for the day. I love running in the morning—I almost never run at night. So, it's a perfect way to

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LEIGH GASES

Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero runs to the finish line of the Run from '23 Mile Race and into his 730th straight day of running on New Year's Eve last Sunday.

Tenorio, Camacho lead SBL Masters League

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

As of Jan. 1, 2024, undefeated Pirates pitcher Dung Tenorio is the pitching leader, while Dodgers' Glen Camacho is the batting leader in the 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL Master's League.

Tenorio leads the league in pitching with a 2-0 win-loss record, one ERA, one earned run, and eight hits, in seven innings pitched. Second is teammate Pete Sablan who also has a two win, no loss record, has a 1.56 ERA, two ER, and nine hits in three games and nine innings pitched. Blue Jays' Cris George wrapped up the Top 3 with a 1.75 ERA, 0-0 record, two games and four innings pitched, one ER, and five hits.

The most strikeouts made so far is Blue Jays' Kevin Kapileo who struck out 16. Sablan is second with 13; Tony Flores has nine; Alvin Takai struck out seven, Clint Quitugua and Tony Benavente have six each;

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LEIGH GASES

Pirates pitcher Dung Tenorio is the leading pitcher in the 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL Masters League as of Jan. 1, 2024.

Jolly Bangerz wrap up v-ball tourney with title

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The Jolly Bangerz wrapped up the 5th Annual Agape Christmas Volleyball Tournament with the championship last Friday at the Agape Gymnasium.

The merry band of young volleyball players captained by John Justo, along with Jerico Castro, Akira Ota, Nahson Padahk, Seth Tababa, Mokyang Kim, Yeshaiah Coleman, Nehemiah Coleman, and Shadrach Coleman, clinched the men's division championship after rallying past 4 Starz in a thrilling finale, 25-20, 17-25, 15-8.

After Jolly Bangerz claimed the first set, 25-20, veteran team 4 Starz made up of Nak Nakashima, Francisco Kumuch, Jerry Saures, Alfredo Guevarra, Danilo Borja, Nilo Calimag, J.R. Gechig, John Nekaifes, Jason Limes, and Marc Danga gave them a run for their money as they evened up the finals in the second set with a 25-17 win.

4 Starz was determined to go all the way and win the title after losing the first set, but the Jolly Bangerz had a secret weapon by way of Castro's untouchable serves.

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LEIGH GASES

Jolly Bangerz poses for a photo with the championship trophy after beating 4 Starz in the finale of the 5th Annual Agape Christmas Volleyball Tournament last Friday at the Agape Gymnasium.